Commentary
January 2002

# Who Is the Enemy?
*Daniel Pipes*

**The Human-Rights Lobby Meets Terrorism**
*Adrian Karatnycky & Arch Puddington*

**Surfing the Novel**
*Joseph Epstein*

**Succeeding Giuliani**
*Fred Siegel*

**The Tehran Temptation**
*Michael Rubin*

**The Last German Master of Music**
*Terry Teachout*

CONTROVERSY
**Pius XII and the Holocaust**
*Kevin Madigan & Critics*

**Books in Review**
*Hillel Halkin • Kay S. Hymowitz • Jacob Heilbrunn*
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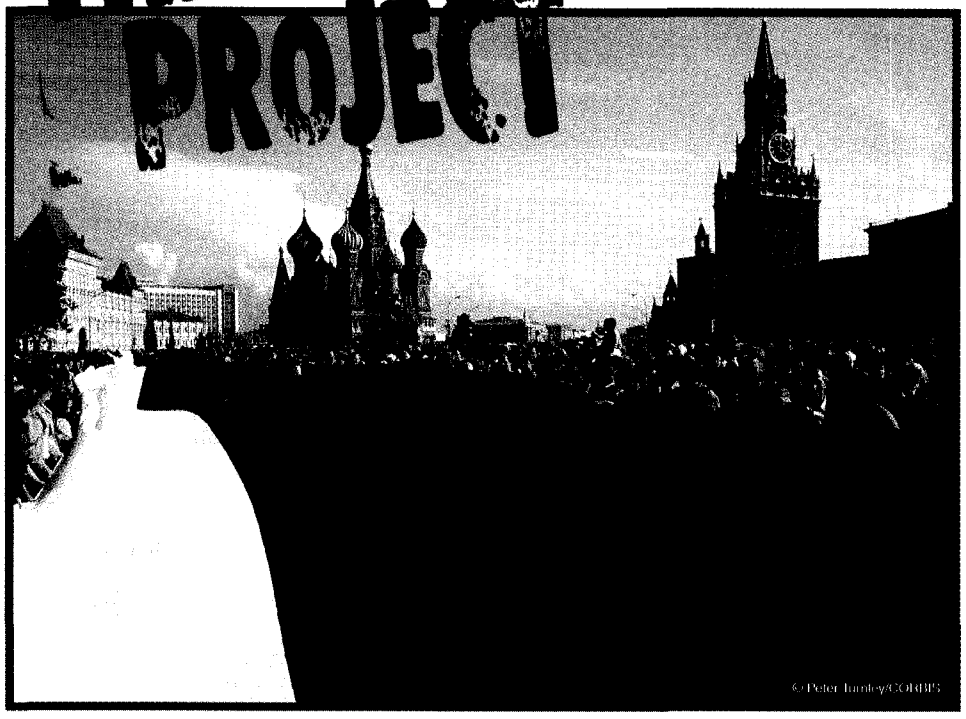


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Commentary

Vol. 113 · January 2002 · No. 1

ARTICLES

21

**Who Is the Enemy?** *Daniel Pipes*
Success in this war requires clarity about exactly what and whom we are fighting—and how to fight them.

28

**The Human-Rights Lobby Meets Terrorism** *Adrian Karatnycky & Arch Puddington*
Why do Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch refuse to call the assaults of September 11 by their proper name?

32

**Surfing the Novel** *Joseph Epstein*
Or, the art of deciding which contemporary fiction merits attention in the age of Oprah.

38

**Succeeding Giuliani** *Fred Siegel*
To judge by the recent mayoral race, New York's future may be starting to look like its grim and not-so-distant past.

OBSERVATIONS

43

**The Tehran Temptation** *Michael Rubin*
Has the moment come to make up with Iran?

MUSIC

47

**The Last German Master** *Terry Teachout*
Long dismissed as passé, the composer Paul Hindemith was a herald of the new tonalism, and a great deal more.

CONTROVERSY

12

**Pius XII and the Holocaust** *Kevin Madigan & Critics*

LETTERS

3
Peacemongers in Israel; business in the EU; women at work; etc.

BOOKS

53 Ivory Towers on Sand by Martin Kramer *Hillel Halkin*

55 On My Honor by Jay Mechling *Kay S. Hymowitz*

58 War in a Time of Peace by David Halberstam *Jacob Heilbrunn*

60 Out of Its Mind by J. Allan Hobson and Jonathan Leonard *Kevin Shapiro*

63 Reaching for Glory edited by Michael Beschloss *Mark Falcoff*

66 Holy War, Inc. by Peter L. Bergen *Marin J. Strmecki*

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Harold Tanner,
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January 2002

# Letters from Readers

## Israel

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz does an excellent job of describing the bankruptcy of the Middle-East "peace process" ["Oslo: The Peacemongers Return," October 2001]. Yet he sees "no glimmer of light at the end of this dark and gloomy tunnel," and his only counsel is that Israel "keep its powder dry"—that is, merely respond to attacks. Is this what Mr. Podhoretz envisions for Israel until the day comes when, in his words, "the Arab world will make its own peace with the existence of a Jewish state"?

This view is no better than that of the "peacemongers." A holding pattern allows aggressors to exact an enormous price. Following this strategy, Israel has been undermined on all levels, leaving a once proud nation to cower in a state of siege. Israel is at war, and in war there is no substitute for victory.

Allen Weingarten
*Morristown, New Jersey*

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz's criticisms of Shimon Peres were, if anything, too mild. Early on in the Oslo "peace process," Peres concluded that Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority (PA) wanted peace and that the Palestinians could live peacefully next to Israel. He became a victim of these beliefs, refusing to acknowledge that the PA aims to obliterate Israel. In this period of uncertainty, Israel thus has a foreign minister who does not publicly support the policies of his own government.

Philip J. Schiller
*Chicago, Illinois*

To the Editor:

As usual, Norman Podhoretz's analysis is insightful. But he understates the case in his comparison of Shimon Peres with Neville Chamberlain. For Chamberlain to have reached Peres's level of appeasement, he would have had to offer Hitler not just Czechoslovakia but parts of England and London itself, and he would have had to do so not before the war but while German bombs were killing and terrorizing British civilians. His appeasement at Munich would have had to take place after Hitler broke his word hundreds of times and after Chamberlain had violated British law by negotiating previous agreements. Chamberlain would also have needed to supply Hitler with some of the weapons being used against England. Furthermore, Hitler's objective would have to have been the ethnic cleansing of the entire English population.

Marc Mehlman
*West Haven, Connecticut*

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz says so well what needs to be said, but permit me one tiny quibble. He characterizes Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as "Alas, no Churchill." I think he is wrong. Sharon's leadership is easily of the same order of magnitude. Both men are associated with the idea that one must "never give up." But Sharon is probably a better tactician than was Churchill, and he is now proving himself a genuine statesman with remarkably clear vision. Defending Israel with measured force while keeping the U.S. State Department out of his hair (at least for the present) is as good a balancing act as Churchill ever performed.

Louis S. Lyons
*Woodland Hills, California*

To the Editor:

In his brilliant essay, Norman Podhoretz wonders why Yasir Arafat failed to accept Israel's offer of more than 90 percent of the occupied territories in order to use the resulting state as a base from which to launch further operations. I suspect it is because, at age 72 and in failing health, Arafat was terrified by the prospect of making peace with Israel only to die before he could start the next



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war, thus going down in history as the great betrayer of the Palestinian dream. He rejected Israel's offer out of concern for his legacy.

SANFORD FRANK
*Encino, California*

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz has written another essential article on the "peace process." His analysis is especially credible when compared with that of Deborah Sontag, whose front-page article in the *New York Times* he examines at length. One searches Sontag's article in vain for the names of the "many" who supposedly now agree with the view that "all the parties, not just Arafat, were to blame" for the collapse of negotiations. The only person she quoted to that effect was the UN special envoy Terje Rød-Larsen.

Throughout the article, Sontag relied on Israel's foreign minister, Shlomo Ben-Ami. But this is what Ben-Ami said in a lengthy interview published in *Haaretz*:

> Arafat's concession vis-à-vis Israel at Oslo was a formal concession. Morally and conceptually, he did not recognize Israel's right to exist. . . . Neither he nor the Palestinian national movement accepts us.

Perhaps all parties to the Oslo negotiations made mistakes, although Sontag is unconvincing on that point. What is indisputable is that the Palestinians came to the summit unprepared to reach a settlement, rejected the offer of a state, made no counteroffer, and then left and started a war. Mr. Podhoretz's article goes a long way toward explaining why.

RICK RICHMAN
*Los Angeles, California*

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz writes that the Israelis "had never interpreted Security Council Resolution 242 as demanding that they return to the pre-1967 borders." But this is not just the Israeli position. According to Arthur J. Goldberg, who was a principal drafter of the resolution as the U.S. representative at the UN, it

> neither commands nor prohibits total Israeli withdrawal. Rather it remits the extent and timing of any withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the parties to the conflict to negotiate.

Misinterpreting Resolution 242 to require withdrawal from all the occupied territories is endemic. In fact, Israel is not required to withdraw unless its new borders will be secure and recognized.

NATHAN DODELL
*Rockville, Maryland*

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz shows remarkable restraint. He could have said, "I told you so," having warned from the start that the peace process was a chimera, resting on wishful thinking and mass delusion. Instead, he has patiently explained why the obstacle to peace is not the Israelis but Palestinian leaders who refuse to compromise.

JACKSON TOBY
*New Brunswick, New Jersey*

TO THE EDITOR:

Considering the events of September 11, Norman Podhoretz's article was prescient. Certainly his quotations from terrorist leaders foretold the coming tragedy. Would that our national intelligence services had taken the same pains to inform themselves.

S. DAVID HARRISON
*Hastings-on-Hudson, New York*

TO THE EDITOR:

As someone whose grandparents helped found Israel, I felt immense sadness after reading Norman Podhoretz's powerful analysis. There appear to be only two possible outcomes to this conflict. Israel may eventually choose to follow the path of the late Meir Kahane's Kach movement, and exterminate or expel Palestinians from Israel and the West Bank. Or the endless bloodshed will produce an accelerating exodus of Israeli Jews to America and other more peaceful and affluent places, eventually leading to a collapse of the Jewish state.

Since I doubt that Israel will ever develop a consensus for killing or expelling millions of Palestinians, I expect the country's trajectory to follow that of the Crusader kingdoms, surviving for 70 or 80 years after its establishment in 1948 and then collapsing under continual Muslim pressure and flagging ideological commitment.

Centuries of oppression provided the original ideological impetus for Zionism, and the Holocaust directly led to the creation of the Jewish state. But more than a half-century of very good circumstances for Jews in America and the West has dissipated the practical pressure for Israel's existence. Younger generations of Jews, both American and Israeli, experience virtually no sense of alienation or fear living in non-Jewish societies. In recent years, the flow of Jews from Israel to the West has probably substantially exceeded that in the reverse direction. For most Jews around the world, Israel is no longer the essential life raft it seemed immediately following World War II. Although we should certainly continue to hope for Israel's permanent existence, hopes and expectations are two entirely different things.

RON UNZ
*Palo Alto, California*

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Having expected to be told in tones of outrage that my comparison of Shimon Peres to Neville Chamberlain went too far, I was surprised to see Philip J. Schiller and Marc Mehlman telling me that it failed to go far enough.

Frankly, however, I cannot find it in my heart to quibble with their very harsh characterizations of Peres. There was a time when he did the state more service than Othello did for Venice. Yet all his past contributions to the security of Israel have in my judgment been nullified by the role he has played in the past decade or so. It is almost incomprehensible to me that, after Arafat's rejection of the Barak-Clinton deal and the unleashing of another and bloodier *intifada*, Peres should still be doing business at the same old stand: encouraging mortally dangerous delusions about the prospect of peace with the Palestinians and pressing the government in which he is foreign minister to act on those fantasies.

As Rick Richman points out, even Shlomo Ben-Ami, the extreme dove who was foreign minister in the Barak government, emerged from the negotiations at Camp David and the ones



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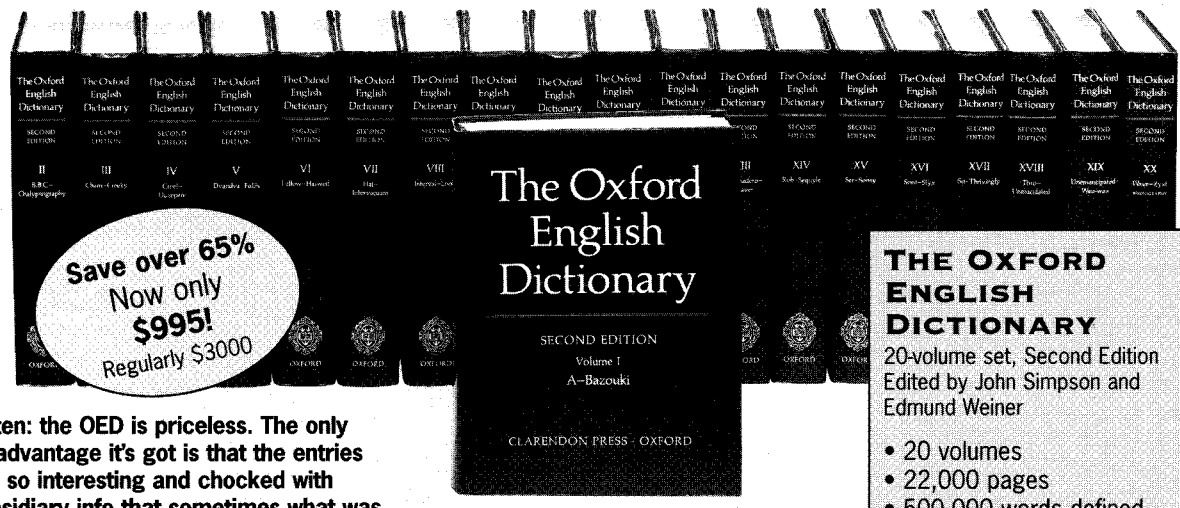


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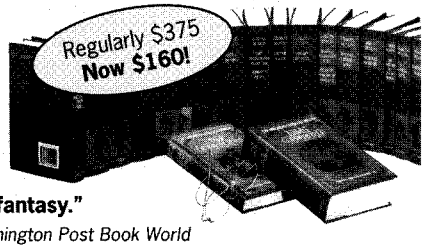


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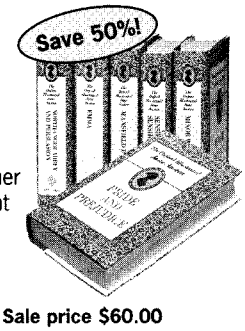


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that followed it with the realization that neither Arafat nor "the Palestinian movement" recognizes "Israel's right to exist." (This, I take it, is what Sanford Frank is also suggesting in bringing up Arafat's concern with his "legacy.")

In other words, the main assumption behind the "peace" process is, and was, a lie. But the peacemongers, led by Peres, have blithely gone on acting as if it were true and had been vindicated. Whichever way one looks at this—politically, intellectually, morally—it is an unmitigated disgrace.

Which brings me to Louis S. Lyons's defense of Ariel Sharon. As other correspondents think I was too soft on Peres, Mr. Lyons thinks I was too hard on Sharon. They argue (as I myself did, though on different grounds) that Peres is worse than Chamberlain; Mr. Lyons contends (as against my own estimate) that Sharon is better than Churchill.

Now, I am willing to acknowledge that the count is not yet in on Sharon, either as a tactician or as a wartime leader. But thus far, alas, I see no sign of Churchillian greatness in him. For one essential thing, he lacks the eloquence that Churchill used so effectively in rallying and maintaining the morale of his people in their darkest hour.

As I write, Sharon is retaliating for the terrible suicide bombings that took place in Jerusalem and Haifa while he was in Washington to meet with President Bush. There is no predicting what the outcome will be, but it seems clear that a turning point has been reached in the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. How Sharon will emerge from this new test of his leadership is impossible to say.

In the meantime, an authentic Churchillian note is sounded by Allen Weingarten when he declares (in a formulation that actually comes not from Churchill himself, but from Douglas MacArthur) that "in war there is no substitute for victory." But at the risk of seeming to contradict myself, I confess that I cannot envisage what victory would look like in this context.

If Mr. Weingarten means the reoccupation by Israel of all the territories it captured in the Six-Day war, he is kidding himself, since the United States and the rest of the world would never permit this. Yet even in the almost inconceivable event that the world were to turn a blind eye to reoccupation, Israel would then become unviable as a Jewish state with a democratic government unless it were—in Ron Unz's words—to "develop a consensus for killing or expelling millions of Palestinians." Again, on the even more dubious assumption that the world would turn a blind eye to such a policy, I agree with Mr. Unz that the Israelis themselves would be incapable of going down that path.

On the other hand, I disagree strongly with Mr. Unz about the alternative scenario he draws (one, incidentally, that is very popular among many Arabs). I do not accept that Israel will wind up as another Crusader kingdom, "collapsing under continual Muslim pressure and flagging ideological commitment." It would be foolish to dismiss this possibility altogether, and Mr. Unz makes a strong case for its realization. But I am still convinced that if the Israelis can hold on tight against the forces he specifies, the day may yet come when the Arab world will call off the war it has been waging against the Jewish state since 1948.

Indeed, the war the United States declared against terrorism after September 11 could hasten that day if it is pursued with as much seriousness and persistence as President Bush has promised. If, in addition, the President can rectify the incoherence involved in embracing some of the countries that have nurtured and sponsored the very disease he has committed us to extirpate, this war could well act as a powerful accelerator of the changes in the Arab world that are a precondition to its acceptance of a sovereign Jewish state in its midst. (Nathan Dodell, incidentally, is right about Security Council Resolution 242, and I did not mean to imply that only Israel has interpreted it in the way he describes.)

A good first step was taken when, after the assaults on Jerusalem and Haifa at the beginning of December, the Bush administration finally dropped the stance of moral equivalence between terrorism and the defense against it that is implied by the phrase "cycle of violence." Instead, Arafat was warned that his future as a leader depended upon putting an end to terrorism, and Washington for once refrained from urging restraint upon Sharon in retaliating for the three assaults.

But only time will tell whether Israel will be accepted as a partner in the war against terrorism rather than an obstacle and a nuisance. If such a change in American policy were to take hold, it would eliminate at least one source of confusion about our aims in the war against terrorism. And it would certainly discourage the expectation of the Palestinians that the United States will go on tying Sharon's hands as they murder more and more Israeli civilians.

For the rest: I thank Jackson Toby and S. David Harrison, as well as the many readers who have communicated with me privately, for their generous comments. Several of these private correspondents have asked for the source of the quotation from Bill Clinton with which my article concludes. I first came upon it in a newspaper story, but more research has uncovered the original source as a report in the June 27, 2001 issue of *Newsweek*, whose version is more colorful than the one I relied upon.

According to that report, Clinton told the guests at a dinner party in New York that he began his response to Arafat's praise of him as a great man with the words, "The hell I am" (rather than, as I had it, "I am not"). The rest of his comment—"I am a colossal failure, and you made me one"—is the same in both versions, except that *Newsweek* has Clinton using the contraction "I'm" instead of "I am."

## Business in the EU

TO THE EDITOR:

Congratulations to Irwin Stelzer for his superb piece, "Is Europe a Threat?" [October 2001]. I wholeheartedly agree with his assessment of the situation in Europe at the moment and the dangers for American



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He is author or editor of more than 40 books, including *Wild Beasts & Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present* (Harvard 1996), *An Intellectual History of Psychology* (3rd edition, Wisconsin, 1995), *The Mind: An Oxford Reader* (Oxford, 1998) *and Aristotle's Psychology* (Columbia, 1989).

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companies. Since 1990, 3,500 new EU "directives" have been issued by Brussels each year, and this tide of regulation shows no sign of being reversed. Businesses are now told, for example, how their employees should climb ladders, and a "vibrations directive" restricts the number of hours a farmer may sit on his tractor. Another recent regulation on workplace discrimination shifts the burden to employers to prove their innocence if brought to court.

Though the actual number of new pieces of EU legislation has fallen since 1990, the regulations being imposed are much broader, requiring no fewer than 400,000 British civil servants to implement them in the United Kingdom alone. Worse, British regulators often "gold-plate" this legislation, interpreting it more strictly than was intended by the EU and thus making the burden on business even greater. If the last two decades are any indication, the European regulatory environment seems certain to become more difficult for American business as the EU looks to expand into Eastern Europe in the years ahead.

JOHN GRIMLEY
*London, England*

IRWIN STELZER writes:

John Grimley is kind to make a few points that I missed. It is true that the British authorities tend to "gold-plate" EU regulations, which means that they try to make a real effort to enforce them, something that their creators on the Continent rarely do. One Italian diplomat told me that his country views EU regulations as "purely theoretical" and hence easily ignored if circumstances require. The British, more accustomed to the rule of law, have no such escape hatch available.

But Mr. Grimley may have missed one cheery possibility. Instead of the regulatory environment becoming "more difficult for American business" as the EU expands, it may collapse of its own weight, and become so clearly unenforceable in those diverse economies as to demand major reform. Not likely, but possible.

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## Women at Work

TO THE EDITOR:

Noemie Emery's review of Naomi Wolf's *Misconceptions: Truth, Lies, and the Unexpected on the Journey to Motherhood* was delightful [Books in Review, October 2001].

What I find most striking about the "feminism" of Wolf and her peers is that, for the most part, it amounts to nothing more than an elaborate, politicized defense of careerism. Does anyone beside me remember that a chief aim of the 1960's counterculture was to allow baby-boomers to escape the conformist tyranny of the career-obsessed "rat race" that had typified their parents' lives? Whatever happened to the hippie rejection of materialism? Whatever happened to those "earth mamas" in their peasant dresses and sandals, baking organic whole-wheat bread?

Feminist ideologues like Wolf and Susan Estrich look at women's lives in terms of career advancement and argue for government-funded programs to facilitate the upwardly-mobile lifestyles of white-collar professional women like themselves. What shall be the fruit of such an ideology, except distaff versions of the "Organization Man"?

Had the feminists of 1969 foreseen that their movement would yield today's typical career woman—stuck in rush-hour traffic, talking to a client on her cell phone, wondering if this month's child support payment will be enough to cover the day care bill—I suspect they might have called the whole thing off.

ROBERT STACY MCCAIN
*Gaithersburg, Maryland*



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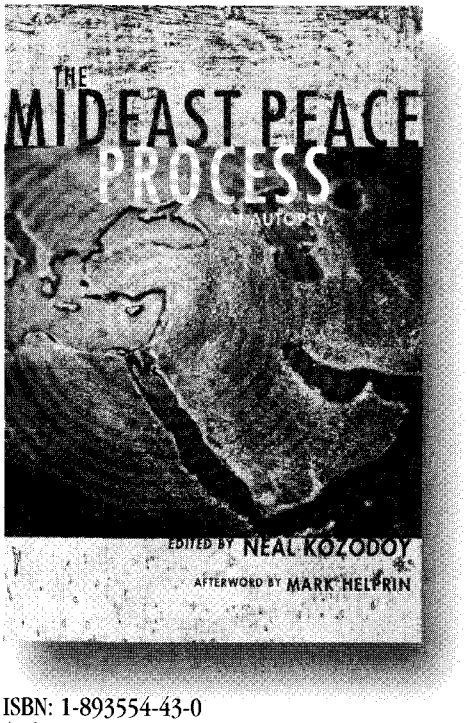
# The Peace Process That Wasn't

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"The judgment of history should be straightforward: the almost ten-year-old Oslo misadventure was born of misconception, delusion, conformity, and cowardice."

—FROM THE AFTERWORD
BY MARK HELPRIN

LAUNCHED IN 1993 AFTER AN AGREEMENT AT OSLO, the Middle East "peace process" was solemnized in the famous handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn. In return for renouncing violence and terrorism, and accepting Israel, the Palestinians were to be given a state. In return for giving up land, the Israelis would get peace. But after seven fitful years, the process collapsed in bloodshed in the autumn of 2000, and since then the bloodshed has grown ever more violent. Today, Israelis and Palestinians are more bitterly divided than ever before.

*The Mideast Peace Process* tells what went wrong and why. For decades, the Israeli negotiating posture was summed up in the phrase "land for peace." Its greatest achievement was the 1977 overture by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt that led to a historic peace deal with Israel and the return to Egypt of the conquered Sinai peninsula. But with Olso, this hard-headed and successful diplomacy was replaced by wishful thinking and the sometimes surreal negotiations presided over by the Clinton administration.

Comprising essays from the pages of Commentary by David Bar-Illan, Douglas Feith, Daniel Pipes, Norman Podhoretz, and other leading observers, this book is a fever chart as well as an autopsy of a spectacularly failed diplomatic initiative. Writing at ground level as the peace process careened from one crisis to the next, the authors show us step by step how Oslo took the Mideast back to a future—of guerrilla struggle and terrorism, if not outright war—that was exactly the future it promised to prevent.

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## A Classic

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you so much for Nancy Yos's "Civilization Meets the Durants" [October 2001]. It is beautifully written. At the heart of her disillusionment with Will Durant are two issues on which I can shed some light: his literary style and his competence as a historian.

I should begin by saying that Will and Ariel Durant knew me from the day I was born in 1931. When I was orphaned as a teenager, I was taken in and raised by a cousin who was married to Will's sister Ethel. They lived in the same house that Will grew up in, and I occupied the large bedroom that had been his from childhood. Still in the room was a large bookcase filled with the Latin and Greek textbooks that Will had used at St. Peter's Prep and St. Peter's College in nearby Jersey City. Will was an outstanding exemplar of the Jesuit rhetorical training he had received at these schools. His writing conformed to the classical norms of Greek and Latin literature. For years Will was my host for dinner every Sunday evening at Chasen's Restaurant here in Los Angeles. To Ariel's delight, he would recite entire orations of Demosthenes in Greek and complete discourses of Cicero in Latin while he enjoyed his special hash browns followed by a generous serving of strawberry shortcake.

Even more significantly, Will followed classical models in his approach to writing philosophy and history. Like the narratives of Xenophon, Thucydides, and Tacitus, the Durants' 11-volume account of civilization is a *story*. This is very different from the modern understanding of history.

HERBERT J. RYAN
*Loyola Marymount University*
*Los Angeles, California*

TO THE EDITOR:

As one who had a similar experience years ago with Arnold Toynbee's *History of Civilization*, I appreciated Nancy Yos's intelligent and entertaining sentiments about first encountering the work of the Durants.

WILLIAM H. RIDDELL
*Tampa, Florida*

## Poland & the Jews

TO THE EDITOR:

Robert S. Wistrich's superb review of *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Jedwabne, Poland* by Jan T. Gross [Books in Review, October 2001] touches on the failure of several parties to reveal the truth about what actually happened at Jedwabne, but leaves untouched the following question: if, as I surmise, the relevant documents about the massacre were readily available at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for a half-century, why did Israeli scholars not do anything with them?

EDWARD ALEXANDER
*Seattle, Washington*

## Going Pro

TO THE EDITOR:

Though an excellent article in most respects, Chester E. Finn's "The Cost of College Sports" [October 2001] fails to address a key factor in our college athletics programs: namely, that they have become a farm-club system for professional sports.

So what are colleges to do? As I see it, their choice is either to abolish college athletics entirely and thereby discontinue this arrangement, or to start awarding two sorts of degrees, one representing proficiency in academic work and the other in athletics.

PETER H. KAUFMAN
*Oceanside, California*



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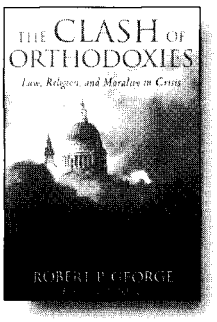


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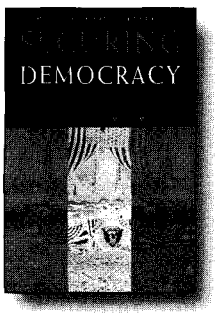


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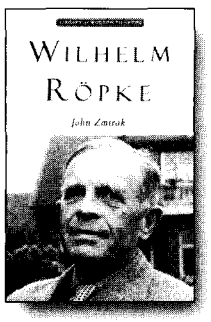


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CONTROVERSY

# Pius XII and the Holocaust

## *Kevin Madigan & Critics*

MICHAEL NOVAK:

Kevin Madigan does not make a persuasive case that Pope Pius XII failed either the Jews of Europe or his own high office ["What the Vatican Knew About the Holocaust, and When," October 2001]. On the contrary, Mr. Madigan testifies that until the death of Pius XII in 1958, his deeds during World War II had raised his stature in the eyes of the Jews—and indeed of the whole world—to remarkable heights.

People of that time knew, as people today have forgotten, that during the war the 300-acre Vatican City depended on the Fascists for its electricity, water, garbage removal, and work force. That work force (including some clergy) was thoroughly penetrated by Italian and German intelligence agents. The Vatican's secret communication codes were known, and its means of communication, even with its own bishops, were open to hostile inspection. Its city gates and approaches were guarded by enemy soldiers.

*Nemo nisi per amicitiam intelligitur*, runs the ancient proverb—no one is understood except through friendship. Those closest to Pius XII's time thought best of him. They themselves understood the terror imposed by the Nazis, and admired his bravery in refusing to leave the Vatican for safer refuge abroad. The Jewish leaders among them well understood the anguished moral dilemma he experienced about how best to help; they, too, debated in their own hearts and council meetings whether to launch public protests or to work quietly to save as many as they could.

Though Mr. Madigan's adversarial approach prevents him from doing full justice to Pius XII, he deserves much credit for bringing the discussion down from high-decibel extremes. He rightly argues that the accusations leveled against the wartime Pope by the playwright Rolf Hochhuth in the 1960's and more recently by the author John Cornwell are "grossly defamatory and absurd" on their face, and he affirms that Pius XII was neither an ally nor a lackey of Hitler, but rather an enemy.

Still, Mr. Madigan's article is disappointing in many respects. To begin with—and contrary to his basic premise—most Catholic defenders of Pius XII hold that the Pope knew fairly early and clearly what the Nazis were doing to the Jews of Europe (and to many others, including Slavs, priests and nuns, and Gypsies). Indeed, the Pope was the first to make these atrocities known to the world. As early as 1940 the Vatican was publishing book-length reports, speedily translated into English, on the persecution of the Church in Germany in the 1930's and the fierce and bloody violence wreaked on Polish Catholics in 1939.

In response to these slaughters, Pius XII formed the strategy that would also guide his actions with respect to the Nazi war against the Jews. The Pope had carefully observed Hitler's uncontrollable irrationality, and had seen how protests—or even the mere mention of certain themes—inflamed the Fuehrer to more flagrant excesses. He adjusted his own course accordingly.

Despite various attempts to shake him from his strategy, the Pope stood resolute, though not without anguish and second thoughts. These were the ingredients of his approach: a principled impartiality among the belligerents; a clear enunciation of moral principles; great restraint in public statements that might be tak-



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en as provocations; a steady provision of reliable information about atrocities and abuses through Vatican Radio and, when possible, the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* (whose distribution was at times severely curtailed by Mussolini); and, finally, the most extensive relief effort ever launched in war-torn countries under hostile governments.

In what the British historian Owen Chadwick calls the single most risky and heroic act in the history of the papacy, Pius XII put himself at the mercy of the Gestapo in 1940 by relaying to the British government a secret offer of surrender by the German general staff. The German Catholic courier who conveyed the message to the Pope was later captured and tortured by the Gestapo but did not reveal his mission. The British, of course, did not accept the offer.

Another of my disappointments with Mr. Madigan's article is his unduly high praise for most of the prosecutors of the case against Pius XII, with little or no notice of their errors and omissions. At the same time, he dismisses the defenders of Pius XII, especially the contemporaneous Jewish defenders, with an astonishing ad-hominem argument: that their words are not to be trusted because they were seeking papal recognition of Israel, or were for other reasons seeking to "ingratiate" themselves. His insinuation that the words of these Jewish spokesmen are not to be trusted is insulting in itself and, in the cases he cites, not at all credible.

Mr. Madigan also totally fails to deal with the best book yet written on the charges against Pius XII, *Hitler, the War, and the Pope* by Ronald J. Rychlak, a law professor at the University of Mississippi. Rychlak, it should be noted, recently took part in a nationally televised debate with Susan Zuccotti—the author of *Under His Very Windows*, yet another indictment of the wartime Pope—and his questioning forced her to make several emendations and retractions. The result of these and other omissions is that Mr. Madigan not only brings nothing new to the table, but at nearly every point leaves out important evidence that runs opposite to his claims.

Finally, Mr. Madigan minimizes those deeds of Pius XII that, given his predicament at the center of Nazi-occupied Europe, were actually quite heroic. As Mr. Madigan puts it, Pius XII "permitted" Catholic clergy, religious, and laity to rescue Jews in peril. He "allowed" Catholic institutions, including Vatican properties, to shelter Jews, and to distribute food, clothing, and money to them. Similarly, Mr. Madigan concedes that Pius XII "must be credited with saving lives" through his intervention on behalf of Italian Jews, and that several papal nuncios, though seemingly without the Pope's knowledge, "tried valiantly to stop deportations."

Mr. Madigan states these achievements in their weakest form, as if no testimony existed from these nuncios and religious institutions about their total confidence that they had the full support of the Pope. But such statements, given under oath, exist in abundance in the records of the beatification process for Pius XII, a source that Mr. Madigan fails to consult.

It is not my place to say whether Pius XII should be declared a saint. That is to be decided only after a rigorous process of examination by competent judges. But the evidence tells me that Pius XII was a just man, of far greater clarity of vision and strength of will than the ordinary run of us. Perhaps his strategy was wrong. Perhaps another Pope would have done better. But a great many of the leaders of his time did not do nearly so much. If Oskar Schindler is a hero for rescuing a thousand Jews threatened with annihilation, and Raoul Wallenberg for saving 20,000 or more, at least some measure of honor and gratitude is due to a man, however flawed, who personally and through others saved still more than that.

I am grateful to Mr. Madigan for having moved the argument forward.

*American Enterprise Institute*
*Washington, D.C.*

RONALD J. RYCHLAK:

Kevin Madigan argues that most writers who think well of Pius XII deny that he knew about the persecution of the Jews until very late in the war. Yet, in my own book, *Hitler, the War, and the Pope*, I expressly reject the notion that the Pope lacked knowledge of the Holocaust: "In all likelihood, the Vatican learned of the plan shortly after the Nazis themselves decided on it. . . . It makes no sense . . . to contend that Pius was unaware of the abuse until after the war." Mr. Madigan's premise is simply a straw man.

In demonstrating that Pius XII knew of these horrors by the end of 1942, Mr. Madigan quotes several pleas for help sent to the Vatican by or on behalf of Jewish victims. Unfortunately, he fails to mention the several Vatican responses (particularly relevant were those in Slovakia and Vichy France) or the letters of thanks it received after taking action (those sent, for example, by Gerhart Riegner and Rabbi Miroslav Freiberger of Zagreb). Such one-sided reporting is unfair.

Strangely, Mr. Madigan chides those who have written on Pius XII for not using the Vatican's published collection of wartime documents (though I have at least 55 citations to this source in my own book), but then he recommends authors like Guenter Lewy, whose book was written before the documents were assembled, and John Morley, whose book was written before the final volumes were published.

In trying to minimize the credit that some writers give to Pius XII for his efforts to save Jews, Mr. Madigan buys into the author Susan Zuccotti's thesis that the Pope merely "permitted" Catholics to help Jews. In fact, Mr. Madigan goes even further, saying that there is "no evidence whatsoever" that Pius XII instructed other Catholics to help. Actually, Zuccotti found much oral testimony to that effect. Numerous people, including Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, have verified that Pius XII directly



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instructed them to save Jewish lives.

This evidence, however, is insufficient for Zuccotti and Mr. Madigan. Unless they find a written order from the Pope, they will give him no credit. This logic is similar to that of Holocaust deniers who will not blame Hitler for the Holocaust because no written orders exist directly linking him to the gas chambers.

*School of Law*
*University of Mississippi*
*University, Mississippi*

WILLIAM A. DONOHUE:

Kevin Madigan argues, with respect to Pius XII and the Holocaust, that "the Vicar of Christ knew enough, but did not care enough, to speak more forcefully or to act more courageously than he did." Unfortunately, he offers not one scintilla of evidence for this slanderous charge.

If it is fair to conclude that an uncaring attitude explains why Pius XII did not speak out more forcefully, then it should be fair to conclude that this motive applies equally to others who acted in a similar manner. Take, for example, the reaction of American Jews to the anti-Semitic policies of the Nazis. When Hitler came to power in 1933, he wasted no time showing his hatred of Jews. American Jewish leaders quickly met to discuss having public demonstrations against the new German leader. Plans were made for an anti-Hitler parade in New York on May 10, 1933. But then the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith put out a joint statement condemning "public agitation in the form of mass demonstrations," fearing it would only "inflame" matters. So there was silence.

Or consider the reaction in 1935 to the Nazis' enactment of the Nuremberg race laws, which effectively stripped German Jews of all civil rights. What did American Jewish leaders do? Led by Rabbi Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress, they worked *against* legislation that would have made it easier for Jews from Germany to emigrate to the U.S.

Three years later, in the wake of the Nazis' Kristallnacht pogrom, major Jewish organizations assembled to discuss their options. The American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, and Jewish Labor Committee debated what to do about immigration reforms that would alleviate the plight of German Jews. Their conclusion: "at least for the time being, nothing should be done with regard to this matter." Furthermore, they declared, "there should be no parades, demonstrations, or protests by [American] Jews."

As Mr. Madigan notes, in August 1942 Gerhart Riegner of the World Jewish Congress notified his colleagues in London and New York of an "alarming report" about plans to exterminate Europe's Jews. But there is little evidence that this galvanized Jewish leaders to act. In fact, these organizations failed to lobby for a bill on Capitol Hill that would have made it easier for Jewish refugees to emigrate from France to the U.S.

The point I wish to make is that there were plenty of good reasons why Jews in the U.S. were not more vocal. Would asking for special treatment anger other Americans? Was there not the specter of rising anti-Semitism at home? If protests mounted in the U.S., might it not worsen the plight of Jews in Europe?

In hindsight, perhaps the reasons American Jews gave for not speaking up more forcefully are unpersuasive. But if someone today were to conclude that Jewish inaction was a function of not caring enough, I would consider the accuser to be anti-Semitic.

This is why Mr. Madigan's charge that Pius XII did not care about what was happening to the Jews is so scurrilous. There were plenty of good reasons why the Pope did not use his bully pulpit. For one thing, many prominent Jews begged him not to stir the pot. As the Anti-Defamation League concluded years later, in response to the charges made by Rolf Hochhuth in his 1963 play *The Deputy*, a formal statement by Pius XII "would have provoked the Nazis to brutal retaliation and would have substantially thwarted further Catholic action on behalf of the Jews."

*President*
*Catholic League for*
*Religious and Civil Rights*
*New York City*

MONSIGNOR JAMES KELLY:

Kevin Madigan denies that Pius XII influenced those Christians who helped Jews; to affirm this would be, he says, to accept an exaggerated view of the Catholic Church's centrality. Why does not the same argument tell against his own contention that many Christians were prepared to risk their lives to resist Hitler, if only the Pope had excommunicated Hitler or those who cooperated with him?

*New York City*

WILLIAM DOINO, JR.:

Every accusation Kevin Madigan makes against Pius XII—concerning the Pope's knowledge of and response to the Holocaust, his alleged indifference toward Polish Catholics and Jews, and his supposed inaction during the Nazi round-up in Rome—has been thoroughly refuted by leading historians, including Oscar Halecki (Poland), Michael Tagliacozzo (Israel), Martin Gilbert and Owen Chadwick (Great Britain), John Conway (Canada), Michael O'Carroll (Ireland), Jeno Levai (Hungary), Jean Chelini (France), Antonio Gaspari and Andrea Tornielli (Italy), Konrad Repgen and Michael Feldkamp (Germany), and John Jay Hughes, John Lukacs, and Ronald Rychlak (United States). One misses in Mr. Madigan's article any mention at all of their views.

*Weston, Connecticut*

REVEREND
VINCENT A. LAPOMARDA, S.J.:

Exactly who, according to Kevin Madigan, has "thoroughly discredited" the work of the Israeli author Pinchas Lapide, whose 1967 book, *The Last Three Popes and the Jews*, argued that Pius XII was responsible



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for saving at least 700,000 Jews from the Nazis?

*Coordinator, Holocaust Collection*
*College of the Holy Cross*
*Worcester, Massachusetts*

ROBERT L. PHILLIPS:

Kevin Madigan's article on Pius XII and the Holocaust belongs to a new class of "nuanced" treatments of the subject. Practitioners of this genre begin by criticizing the author John Cornwell for the crudeness of his *Hitler's Pope* (1999), but having thus satisfied the demands of fairness, they arrive at Cornwell's conclusion: Pius XII was no saint.

Mr. Madigan tries to rebut Rabbi David Dalin's claim in the *Weekly Standard* that the enemies of Pius XII are all disgruntled Catholics by noting that two chief critics of the Pope are in fact priests. But Mr. Madigan well knows that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council a Roman collar is no guarantee of orthodoxy. After all, even John Cornwell has the nerve to style himself a Catholic.

Who becomes a saint in the Catholic Church is none of COMMENTARY's business. When Pius XII is canonized, he will be in heaven interceding for us before God regardless of what Mr. Madigan or anyone else says.

*West Hartford, Connecticut*

D. S. RAGSDALE:

I found Kevin Madigan's essay well-balanced and free of the ideological biases that taint too many of the critics of Pius XII.

Nonetheless, Mr. Madigan gives too little attention to the legitimate concern on the part of the Vatican that any statement explicitly denouncing the deportation and massacre of Jews would be met with a brutal response. In retrospect this may seem like a cowardly argument, but the Vatican had only the example of the Dutch Catholic bishops, whose strong statements against the Nazis in 1942 led to the deportation of Jews who had converted to Catholicism.

*Los Angeles, California*

DORIS L. BERGEN:

Kevin Madigan's careful exposition should lay to rest once and for all the old excuse that Pius XII did not know about the mass murder of European Jews during World War II. Mr. Madigan recounts the familiar sources of papal intelligence—Vatican diplomats, Jewish leaders, representatives of international organizations—and makes a significant addition to the list: in May 1942, Pirro Scavizzi, an Italian priest and military chaplain—and a friend of the Pope's family—reported from Ukraine that the slaughter of Jews there was "complete." Even Pius XII could not dismiss such a trusted eyewitness.

So why did the papacy not act more energetically to protect Jews? Mr. Madigan prudently sidesteps the question of Pius XII's anti-Semitism but still concludes that "in other circumstances, and where Jews were not concerned," the Pope was not always the cautious politician. A glance at some "other circumstances" in the context of World War II indicates, however, that Pius made a habit of reticence.

In 1939, when Germans slaughtered thousands of Polish intellectuals, including many Catholic priests, the Pope was silent. He was only slightly more outspoken in defense of Nazism's handicapped victims, although they included Catholics and inmates of Catholic-run hospitals and asylums. As for the approximately three million Soviet prisoners of war whom Germans killed or allowed to die of starvation and disease in 1941-42, no one seems to notice that the Pope said nothing on their behalf, nor do even Pius XII's sharpest critics mention his apparent indifference to the murder of hundreds of thousands of Roma (Gypsies).

Each failure to protest must have made it harder to speak out the next time. The result: during World War II, the Vatican failed to engage the desperation and agony of a world torn by mass death, to show humanitarian leadership and solidarity with people outside the Church, or even to extend itself fully on behalf of all Catholics.

Mr. Madigan is right to resist the facile assumption that "nearly everyone" who criticizes Pius XII's wartime conduct "is a lapsed or angry Catholic." As neither the one nor the other, I consider it crucial to point out that the legacy of Nazi crimes belongs to all Christians, regardless of confession or denomination. By World War II, despite years of anti-Christian propaganda, more than 95 percent of Germans were still baptized, tax-paying members of an established Christian church. Indeed, self-identified Christians of all kinds did more than passively allow the Holocaust to happen: they carried out most of the theft, torture, and killing.

Shocking and painful as it is to confront the Vatican's wartime failures and "sins of omission," it is even harder to face Christian "sins of commission." Seen this way, Kevin Madigan's convincing arguments about the Pope and what he knew are also a valuable reminder of how far we still need to go before we understand the complex involvement of Christians and Christianity in the Holocaust.

*Department of History*
*University of Notre Dame*
*Notre Dame, Indiana*

JOHN FARRELL:

I confess to suffering from what might be called "Pius fatigue syndrome," the intellectual exhaustion that sets in on Catholics who realize that they have spent years running to their libraries to reexamine the unfortunate wartime papacy of Pius XII. There comes a time when one realizes that the constant attempt to rationalize and whitewash—and I know the feverish defenses of Pius XII from the usual suspects on the conservative end of American Catholicism will continue—is self-defeating and intellectually dishonest. Casuistry has no place in the Church, but I am afraid that is all that remains to those who continue to try to make a hero and saint out of man who was too ready to "wait and see."

*Boston, Massachusetts*



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DONALD FELDSTEIN:

"What the Vatican Knew About the Holocaust, and When" is comprehensive, persuasive, and well balanced. Kevin Madigan might also have discussed the recent collapse, amid accusations that the Vatican was refusing to release relevant archival material, of a panel of Jewish and Catholic historians convened to investigate the Church's actions during the Holocaust. If the Vatican's spokesman is correct that the documents already released demonstrate conclusively that Pius XII made every effort to save as many lives as possible, one would think that the Church would be eager to release every relevant document. Mr. Madigan did a great job with the available material, but people will continue to doubt his conclusions until all the archives are opened.

*Teaneck, New Jersey*

HANS FISHER:

David I. Kertzer's careful documentation in *The Popes Against the Jews*, his new book about the attitudes of the Church toward Jews over the last two centuries, is so damning as to make the question of what Pius XII did or did not do during the Holocaust a mere distraction. The hateful dissemination of anti-Semitic vitriol in the most important Vatican publications, *L'Osservatore Romano* and *Civiltà Cattolica*, gives the lie to Pope John Paul II's assertion that the Church took issue with Judaism and Jews only on religious grounds. High church officials distributed the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and helped lead the attack against Dreyfus in France; even after the truth became known and Dreyfus was exonerated, Vatican publications blamed world Jewry for its untoward influence in getting him released. And as late as 1915, Church publications repeated the slander of Jewish ritual murders. This, and not Pius XII's behavior, is the real scandal.

*Highland Park, New Jersey*

## Kevin Madigan

As is obvious, many of my correspondents are committed in a-priori fashion to the impeccability of Pius XII. For these individuals, I doubt that any response I make, or any evidence I offer, is likely to change minds. Even less do I suppose my response will be heard charitably. But let me begin with the lengthiest and most civil letter, from Michael Novak, and thereby reply as well to those letters written in tones he rightly deplores as "high-decibel extremes."

I energetically agree with Mr. Novak that, in attempting to understand Pius, it is imperative to appreciate how his own contemporaries perceived him. Let us, then, follow that principle. It is important to recall, for example, the speech given by Alfred Delp, S.J., to a conference of bishops at Fulda in 1943, at a moment when thousands of Jewish lives were being cruelly extinguished *every day*. "Has the Church," Delp asked, "forgotten to say 'Thou shalt not'? Has the Church lost sight of the commandments?. . . Or has the Church forgotten humanity and its fundamental rights?"

I have not seen Delp quoted in any of the books recently published in defense of Pius. Nor will one find in these defenses the words of the British minister to the Holy See, Francis d'Arcy Osborne, who, after the Vatican threatened to protest publicly if the Allies bombed the Eternal City, recommended that "Instead of thinking of nothing but the bombing of Rome," the Church consider "its actions in respect to the unprecedented crime against humanity of Hitler's campaign of extermination of the Jews." When Allied raids did indeed damage the Basilica San Lorenzo, Pius finally appeared in public to complain of the danger to the city's "priceless treasures"; neither the Catholic nor the far more imperiled Jewish residents of Rome were among the treasures he had in mind.

In still another vignette one is unlikely to come across in the works of Pius's defenders, Bishop Preysing of Berlin, having received a letter from the Pope about the damage wrought by Allied bombardment, felt compelled to remind him that, with "the new wave of Jewish deportations," the bishop's own episcopal see had suffered something far "more agonizing" than had Pius's. Then there are the words of Wladislaw Rackiewicz, the Polish president-in-exile, who in the face of Pius's failure to denounce Nazi atrocities unambiguously was impelled to admonish the Vicar of Christ that "divine law knows no compromise."

The great Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain was appointed French ambassador to the Holy See in 1945. Unable to convince the Holy Father to denounce anti-Semitism, Maritain concluded that Pius's "attention to the political is too great considering the essential role of the Church" as the custodian of moral truth and authority. But even Maritain has been ignominiously silenced. What, then, of Mr. Novak's principle that contemporary evaluations must be taken into consideration in any attempt to understand Pius XII?

Mr. Novak also criticizes me for failing to use the dossier assembled in connection with Pius's beatification. Let me remind him of a basic rule of professional writing—namely, that documents produced for the purposes of hagiography are to be treated with extreme caution. That Susan Zuccotti, for example, declined to make use of these documents is a sign not of scholarly dereliction but of adherence to established standards. In fact, the documents say next to nothing reliable about what Pius thought about the Holocaust, what he did about it, or why he decided on one course of conduct rather than another. They are of use mainly to scholars interested in the history of saint-making.

Some of Mr. Novak's arguments show other kinds of slippage. Thus,



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in contending that Pius was among the first to make Hitler's atrocities known to the world, he observes that the Vatican reported on the persecution of the Church in Germany and of the "violence wreaked on Polish Catholics in 1939." That is true. But my article was about Pius's response to the massive slaughter of European *Jews*, which had not even begun until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the fall of 1941.

Another slip occurs when Mr. Novak observes, again correctly, that the Pope was willing to act in 1940 as a mediator between German generals plotting to assassinate Hitler and the British. It would be churlish to point out that, even then, Pius hesitated before acting, or to recall d'Arcy Osborne's testimony that Pius "did not relish" being used as a channel. The main point is this: the Pope's willingness to be so used was motivated by a desire to stop Hitler from occupying *Catholic France*, as well as Belgium and Holland. Since, to repeat, Himmler and Heydrich's killing operations had yet to begin, Pius's action had nothing to do with stopping *Einsatzgruppen* massacres or halting deportations. Such effects may conceivably have resulted from Pius's mediation; but they were emphatically not its intent. The whole episode thus provides the flimsiest evidence imaginable for Pius as a philo-Semite, or Pius as a heroic defender of the Jews. It is utterly unrelated to the whole question of Pius and the Holocaust.

Once the killing operations began in earnest, Pius did have a chance to act, being richly informed about the atrocities occurring in the East. About the last point, at least, Mr. Novak seems to agree with me. Where we disagree is on the crucial question of whether or not most of Pius's defenders agree with *us*. Although Mr. Novak says they do, some of them, including all of the influential editors of the published Vatican documents, in fact denied that Pius knew what was happening.

Here we ought to begin again, according to Mr. Novak's stated principle, with those closest to Pius's own time. In a March 27, 1963 article in the *Frankfürter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Robert Leiber, S.J., Pius's secretary for 34 years (1924-58), stated that the Pope "did not know what was really happening. Nor did the Allies. It was not until after the war that they were able to realize the extent of the Nazi crimes." Again, in an article published in *Civiltà Cattolica* (June 1964), Angelo Martini, one of the four Jesuit editors of the published Vatican documents, declared: "The decision to adopt the Final Solution . . . was suspected from the middle of 1942, but the details were clear only when the extermination was completed, i.e., after the defeat." Listen, too, to the comments of Vladimir d'Ormesson, French ambassador in Rome until October 1940: "Like everyone else, Pius XII was uninformed about the monstrous refinements of cruelty of which the Jews were the secret victims." More recently (1988), Robert Graham, S.J., another of the editors of the documents, declared in this same connection, "The full truth of what was known only came later." Finally, and most recently, Pierre Blet, S.J., the most authoritative scholar among the editors, contended in *Pius XII and the Second World War*, published in *1999*, that "as long as the war lasted, the fate of the deportees was shrouded in obscurity," concealed by a "curtain of fog."

It is thus simply not true, as Mr. Novak would have it, that "most Catholic defenders of Pius XII hold that the Pope knew fairly early and clearly what the Nazis were doing to the Jews of Europe." *Not one* of the Jesuit editors of the Vatican documents would have agreed with this statement. All tried to defend him on the basis of his partial or almost total ignorance of the facts.

In general, then, Michael Novak's criticisms reflect his own noble and sincere Catholic aspirations rather than an authentic confrontation with the historical record. As a Catholic who wishes the best for his Church, I do not savor this troubling record, but it is imperative to face it.

IN ANSWER to Vincent Lapomarda, a number of authors have authoritatively discredited Pinchas Lapide's estimates. Susan Zuccotti, for example, concludes severely if with justice that Lapide's book is "replete with egregious mistakes and distortions." But since Father Lapomarda is unlikely to accept Zuccotti's verdict, let me point out that even Lapide himself did not credit Pius XII personally, but rather the *Church*, with saving between 700,000 and 860,000 lives (see page 215 of his *The Last Three Popes and the Jews*). By a sleight of hand, Pius's apologists have transferred this credit to Pius himself.

I can assure Robert L. Phillips that it was not COMMENTARY's editors but I who made the arguments he finds so objectionable. But let me also gently recommend caution in claiming to know who and who is not a real Catholic. I could more nearly agree with Mr. Phillips's declaration that Pius "will be in heaven interceding for us before God" had the Pope chosen to intercede on earth more forcefully for the Jews.

And here is perhaps a good place to point out where exactly the logic of Pius's defenders leads them. If the Pope were as thoroughly in charge of the activities of Catholic subordinates during the war as these defenders insist, by the same logic he must also have overseen the efforts of clerics associated with the Vatican *after* the war to assist Nazi and Ustashi war criminals in escaping Allied justice. One thinks especially of the case of Franz Stangl, who, with the help of the Vatican's Bishop Alois Hudal, was housed, hidden, and provisioned with money and papers that enabled him to flee Europe, first to the Middle East and then to South America, where he spent most of the rest of his life. Stangl happened to have been the commandant of Tre-



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blinka, in which capacity he oversaw the murder of nearly one million Jews. Hudal also helped Adolf Eichmann escape justice.

For myself, I am willing to grant that Pius may have known no more about Hudal's criminal campaign of deliverance than he knew about, much less managed or superintended, the thousands of anonymous acts of genuine rescue that occurred in Rome, Italy, and on the Continent at large. But those who demand that Pius be given credit for the latter must also, by their own ahistorical logic of papal sovereignty, assign him blame for the former. It is a matter of record that Pius was far more vocal in demanding clemency for war criminals than he was in demanding mercy for war victims. Has *this* fact made it into the beatification dossier?

I take very seriously the argument advanced by many, and here by D.S. Ragsdale, that an explicit denunciation of Nazi atrocity might have led to a more brutal Nazi response. Mr. Ragsdale is right to point to the Dutch case of 1942. But once again we need to remember the chronology. In 1942, a policy of restraint may have been defensible (if not heroic or noble); but this argument got weaker with every passing month. By early 1943, at the latest, with the Jews of Europe either dead or waiting for death, the Holy See might well have asked itself how any action on its part could possibly worsen what was by then a catastrophically bad situation. Defenders of Pius, if they wish to be regarded seriously by those other than themselves, have to wonder whether his policies were saintly, or even defensible, in the last three years of the war.

Be that as it may, my intention was not to say that the Vatican should have adopted this or that course. It was to ask whether one who chose an essentially passive stance toward an atrocity about which he was well and even fully informed deserves recognition as a "righteous Gentile," as was proposed by David Dalin.

I want to register once more, as I did briefly in my article, my areas of agreement with Dalin. First, there is a lot of pseudohistorical writing on the Vatican and the Holocaust. In much of this writing, Pius has become a cipher—for the Right as well as for the Left—in a larger war over the future of the Church, over the course of Jewish-Christian relations, and over the place of religious authority and values in an increasingly irreligious world. It is these extra-historical issues that the controversy over Pius's canonization proceedings—even, I suspect, Dalin's own recommendation that he be recognized as a righteous Gentile—is really about. Because the ecclesiological and cultural stakes are so high, the categories in which Pius has been discussed are often ludicrously, even childishly, polar: *either* he was Hitler's Pope *or* he was a righteous Gentile. The results for an understanding of history have been, to say the least, unfortunate.

My own hope was to encourage us all to eschew these extreme categories—for this reason, by the way, I reject Michael Novak's caricature of my approach as "adversarial." When we can see Pius for the unheroic man he was, neither monstrous nor saintly, he will assume much less political or moral utility to either side.

In this respect, I also agree with David Dalin that it is a gross error to "make Pius XII a target of moral outrage." For that is to lose sight of the stark fact that Hitler, not Pius, was the Prince of Darkness in 1940's Europe. It is also to fail to perceive that other churches, Protestant as well as Catholic, played a terrible role not only in failing to resist but in actively promoting National Socialism. (Their record is brilliantly documented in Doris L. Bergen's 1996 book, *Twisted Cross*.)

PIUS XII never approached that level of moral depravity; as I stipulated in my article, he even attempted, with only temporary success, to do *some things* to halt deportations (particularly with the aid of bishops, nuncios, and political figures in Catholic Slovakia, Croatia, and Hungary). But I also agree in the end with Robert Wistrich's carefully stated judgment that there was "a paucity of moral courage displayed by the Vatican when it came to the fate of the Jews." Pius's apologists need to train themselves to hold these two truths in their minds at once.

They also ought to desist from reactively (and ignobly) lashing out against those who, on the basis of their reading of the evidence, arrive in conscience at different historical and moral conclusions from their own. Neither I, nor John Morley, nor Michael Marrus, nor John Pawlikowski, nor Michael Phayer, nor Susan Zuccotti has argued that a morally failed pope did, or could, discredit the Catholic faith. His defenders, on the other hand, have at times involved themselves in evasions of truth that do threaten to discredit the Church. We could all benefit from pondering the words of Cardinal Newman: "To conscience first; then the Pope." Not to mention an even more authoritative text: "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

I want to close by thanking my correspondents for taking the time to write and for their contributions to this important and vexed question. I am especially grateful to the distinguished scholar Doris L. Bergen, not only for supporting my argument but for suggesting lines of inquiry that may now be fruitfully taken up by all who desire an honest reckoning with the Church's past.



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# Those "Palestinian Refugees"

## Who are they, what is the real story?

Although, in view of the violence of the Palestinians, negotiations with them would seem fruitless, or at least a long way off, one issue that will arise again is that of the "Palestinian Refugees." It has been a sticking point in past negotiations and will without question arise again. These "refugees" are the children and mostly grandchildren of those who left Israel during the 1948 War of Independence. Yasser Arafat insists that there can be no peace unless those "refugees" are allowed to "return" to Israel.

## What are the facts?

**650,000 "refugees" swell to 5 million.** You have heard about those "Palestinian refugees", who claim "right of return" to Israel. Of course, virtually none of them ever lived in Israel -- they are the children and mostly grandchildren of those who fled in 1948. The total number of those who fled in 1948 is estimated to have been about 650,000. Now the number who wish to return has swollen to almost five million!

How did this exodus come about? In 1948, on the day of the proclamation of the State of Israel, five Arab armies invaded the new country from all sides. In frightful radio broadcasts, they urged the Arabs living there to leave, so that the invading armies could operate without interference. They could return after the expected quick victory in that "holy war", get their property back -- *and* that of the Jews. Things turned out differently. The invading armies were defeated. Those who had left became refugees -- people without a country. Those who stayed, and their children, are full-fledged citizens of the state of Israel.

> The Arabs are committed not to allow any "non-believers" to be in control of any part of the Middle East. That is the real cause of the "Palestinian refugee problem."

These so-called "Palestinian refugees" have not been allowed to settle in the "indivisible Arab nation". They have been supported in camps since 1948. So far, close to $1.8 billion has been spent on their maintenance. No end is in sight. Who pays for that? You guessed it: Through UNWRA Relief, the United States contributes more than 60% of the total cost.

The Arab countries, among them some of the richest in the world who fritter away their enormous fortunes on undreamed luxuries, are satisfied to leave their Arab brethren in those miserable camps. They have never contributed a penny to their maintenance.

**Another side of the "refugee" story.** But there is another side to the "refugee" story. Little is heard of the 800,000 Jewish refugees from Arab countries, who fled those countries to settle in the newly formed Jewish State of Israel. Every one of those refugees was immediately accepted, resettled, taken care of, and given full citizenship by the fledgling, impoverished, and embattled Jewish State. There never has been, and there certainly is not now, a Jewish "refugee" camp in Israel or anywhere else.

The Arab "refugees" who fled Israel left little wealth and little history, since most of them had not come to "Palestine" until Jewish settlers opened economic opportunities in what had been a desolate country for centuries. But the Jews of Arab lands have a history going back thousands of years. When forced to flee, they left behind land, wealth, and a long history. They arrived in Israel, quite literally only "with their shirts on their backs." They now make up almost 60% of the vibrant and productive population of Israel. What have the Arabs, the richest people in the world, done with <u>their</u> "refugees" in more than 50 years? They have kept them in misery, on the dole of the world, and have taught their hopeless youth the "skills" of suicide missions and of slaughtering defenseless and unarmed men, women, and children.

If the Arab nations truly decided to make peace with Israel and to put an end to the century-long strife, they could easily accomplish it by accepting the "Palestinian refugees" in their countries and, just as Israel did with Jewish refugees from Arab countries, integrating them into their societies and making useful citizens of them. In fact, acceptance in their countries might also be offered to the Israeli Arabs, who, despite enjoying a higher standard of living, education, and health than Arabs in any of the surrounding countries and despite having the same civil rights as Israeli Jews, are not happy to live in a Jewish state.

Population transfers are common, especially in the wake of wars. They have been practiced throughout history. In 1923, Greece and Turkey agreed to the resettlement of 2 million Greeks and 800,000 Turks; in 1945, the resettlement of 3 million Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia was arranged. Following the collapse of its North African empire, France accepted close to 1.5 million people. More than 12 million (!) Muslims and Hindus were exchanged between India and Pakistan.

It is clear that the "Palestinian refugee problem" is a red herring, kept alive by the Arab nations for their political purposes, and with cynical disregard for the great number of impoverished people who live in these camps. It is being kept alive and is being used as a "non-negotiable" bargaining chip, for the purpose of destroying the State of Israel -- a feat that the Arabs have attempted several times by military means, but which has always ended in disastrous failure. Apart from the unsolvable social problems it would create, the introduction of, say, even one-half of the 5 million who claim to be "refugees" would, with one stroke, dramatically alter the demographic makeup of the country and would inevitably destroy the Jewish State. That is of course the whole idea behind the demand for the "return of the refugees". If the Arab nations were willing to solve the "refugee problem", the legitimacy of Israel could no longer be questioned. But that is not acceptable to the Arabs. They are firmly committed not to allow Israel or any "non-believers" to be in control of any part of the Middle East. It is that, and that alone, which is the real cause of the "Palestinian refugee problem."

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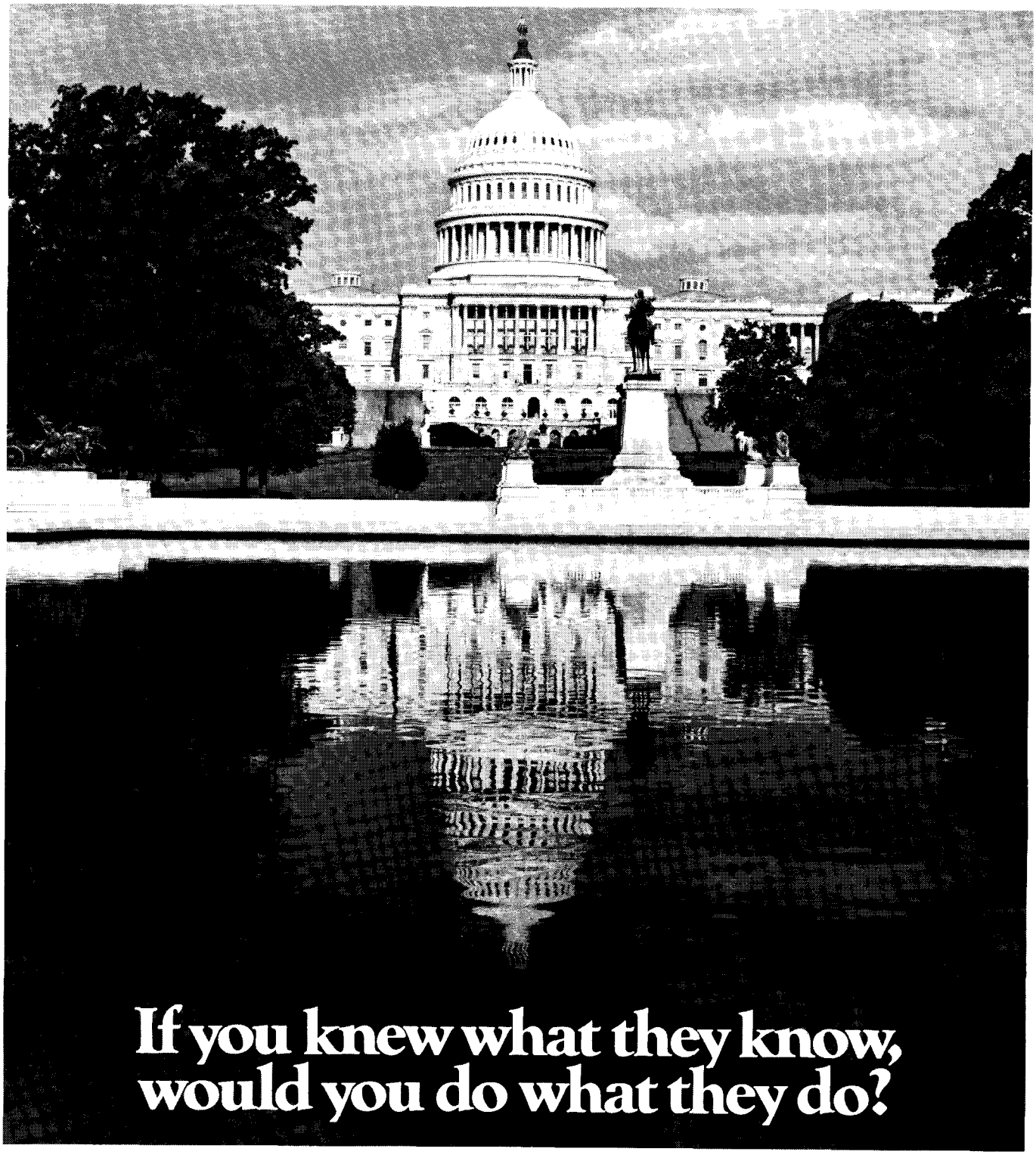

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Commentary
January 2002

# Who Is the Enemy?

*Daniel Pipes*

With whom, or what, is the United States at war? The answer to this question has far-reaching implications for strategy, for public diplomacy, and for foreign and domestic policy alike. It may seem that the answer is obvious; but it is not.

In the first few weeks after September 11, whenever President George W. Bush referred to enemies, he insisted they were neither Afghans nor even Muslims but rather people he called "evildoers" or "the evil ones." This odd and somewhat comical-sounding phrasing seems to have been chosen deliberately so as not to offend anyone, or any group. It also permitted Bush to lump a variety of events under a single rubric even before it was known who was responsible for which of them. Thus, when mysterious anthrax letters began appearing, he again blamed these same amorphous "evildoers" for "continuing to try to harm America and Americans."

What were the goals of these evildoers? Here, too, Bush was careful to speak in generalities. They were people "motivated by hate," or, somewhat more specifically, "people that [had] no country," or, on another occasion, "people that may try to take a country, parasites that may try to leech onto a host country." When it came to what the United States was planning to do about them, the President was once more cautious to a fault, speaking mostly of "hunting down the evildoers and bringing them to justice."

Not even after the war began in early October did Bush strive for greater precision, tending rather to refer to the hostilities as a "common effort to stamp out evil where we find it." The one innovation was to introduce the concept of a "war on terrorism," sometimes modified as a "war on terrorism and evil." But this made arguably even less sense. Terrorism is a military tactic employed by different groups and individuals around the world for different ends. To speak of a "war on terrorism" is a little like speaking about a war on weapons of mass destruction. One needs to know who owns or is deploying these weapons, and for what reason.

What about the objectives of the war? These were (and still are) equally murky. When Bush announced the initiation of military action on October 7, he defined the goal as "the disruption and . . . defeat of the global terror network," a neologism that once again begged the question. For what *is* the global terror network? Other than al Qaeda, what organizations belong to it? Does it include militant Islamic groups like Hizbullah and Hamas? Non-Muslim terrorist groups like the Irish Republican Army and the Tamil Tigers? States like Iraq?

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, for one, seemed troubled by the vagueness of this ambitious goal. At one early point, he dismissed as unrealistic "the idea of eliminating [terrorism] from the face of the earth." But he proceeded to propose a no

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less elusive aim. Americans are a freedom-loving people, Rumsfeld said, so the definition of victory was an environment in which they could "in fact fulfill and live those freedoms," and in which others would be prevented "from adversely affecting our way of life." This was admirable, especially the last part, though hardly an objective to hand to a general and say, "Accomplish this."

THE ACTUAL unfolding of the "war on terrorism" has done little to dispel this lack of clarity. Initially, the declared purpose in Afghanistan was not to extirpate the Taliban regime but merely to compel it to hand over Osama bin Laden and his colleagues; only when the Taliban refused did the full force of the U.S. military descend on them. The same story may be repeating itself with respect to Iraq. In late November, the President demanded that Saddam Hussein permit the resumption of weapons inspections or face the consequences. When asked at a press conference what those consequences might be, Bush cryptically replied: "He'll find out."

At least one well-informed observer understood this to mean that Bush did not know what he was going to do next.* Indeed, as of early December, it seemed safe to say that, beyond the fighting in Afghanistan, the U.S. government had not yet reached a decision on its future steps.

All this may be understandable enough. Conceptually, the conflict in which the United States is engaged is something new. It is being fought against shadows—no one, for instance, has yet made a completely forthcoming claim of responsibility for the atrocities of September 11—and this very fact has rendered meaningless such conventional war goals as defeating an army or seizing territory. Then, too, the United States was caught essentially unprepared on September 11. No matter how many times it had been hit by terrorists before—and there were many such occasions—Americans never expected to find themselves launching a full-scale war against this enemy.

Moreover, euphemisms in wartime can be beneficial, and all the more so when one is flying, so to speak, in the dark. Entering emergency mode on September 11, the government instinctively shied away from specifics lest they tie its hands. Targeting "evildoers" and "terrorism," mentioning no names beyond Osama bin Laden, offered maximum flexibility. By not insulting anyone in particular, Washington could more easily woo potential partners for the U.S.-led "coalition against terror." By the same token, the administration could, at least theoretically, add or subtract targets as circumstances warranted; today's partner—Syria, for example—could become tomorrow's evildoer.

But vagueness also exacts costs. If politicians impart imprecise or contradictory goals to their military leaders, wrote Carl von Clausewitz in *On War* (1832), their efforts will almost certainly run up against major difficulties. The history of warfare throughout the ages confirms this iron rule, as Americans have had occasion to note in recent decades (from Eisenhower's not traversing Europe fast enough to fend off the Soviet advance in World War II to Norman Schwarzkopf's not eliminating Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard in Operation Desert Storm). Nor are generals the only ones who need to know whom they are fighting and what they are fighting for; so do others in government, so do foreign friends and enemies alike, and so, of course, do the American people.

WHO, THEN, is the enemy? The message of September 11 was loud and clear, allowing for no ambiguity: the enemy is militant Islam. No wonder, then, that even before knowing who exactly was responsible, the government has been reluctant to say so. In addition to the considerations I have already enumerated, there was the precedent of recent history to deter it.

In February 1995, at the peak of the horrific violence in Algeria that pitted armed and brutal Islamist groups against a repressive government, NATO Secretary General Willy Claes declared that, since the end of the cold war, "Islamic militancy has emerged as perhaps the single gravest threat to the NATO alliance and to Western security." Indeed, Claes said, not only did militant Islam pose the same kind of threat to the West as Communism before it, but the scale of the danger was greater, for militant Islam encompassed elements of "terrorism, religious fanaticism, and the exploitation of social and economic injustice."

Claes was absolutely correct. But his statements met with outrage from all over the Muslim world, and he was quickly forced to retract and to withdraw. "Religious fundamentalism," he explained lamely, "whether Islamic or of other varieties, is not a concern for NATO."

In the wake of September 11, it may be somewhat easier to say what Claes was not allowed to say then; but only somewhat, and not for anyone in a position of authority. Certain it is that no one wants to have to retrace Claes's red-faced retreat. And yet, awkward as it may be to say, there is no getting around the fact.

* Robert Kagan, "On to Phase II," *Washington Post*, November 27, 2001.



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At least since 1979, when Ayatollah Khomeini seized power in Iran with the war-cry, "Death to America," militant Islam, also known as Islamism, has been the self-declared enemy of the United States. It has now become enemy number one. Whether it is the terrorist organizations and individuals Washington is targeting, the immigrants it is questioning, or the states it is holding under suspicion, virtually all are Islamist or connected with Islamists. Washington may not speak its mind, but its actions express its real views.

I want to be clear. To define militant Islam as the country's most worrisome, long-term opponent is hardly to deny the existence of other opponents. There is no single danger as terrifying as Saddam Hussein with nuclear weapons. Nor is there any dearth of other non-Islamist adversaries around the globe, whether within the Muslim orbit (Syria, Libya, the PA) or outside it (North Korea, Cuba, etc.). But these adversaries lack several features that make militant Islam so threatening—its ideological fervency, its reach, its ambitiousness, and its staying power. However great the Iraqi threat, it is limited to the military dimension, to one odious dictator and his circle, and to raw intimidation. Although the constituency of militant Islam is limited to Muslims, this constituency represents, after all, about a sixth of the human race, enjoys a very high birth rate, and is found in nearly every part of the world.

At a moment when the European-derived extremes of the Communist Left and fascist Right are tired and on the whole ineffectual, militant Islam has proved itself to be the only truly vital totalitarian movement in the world today. As one after another of its leaders has made clear, it regards itself as the only rival, and the inevitable successor, to Western civilization. Although a number of (wrong-headed) Western observers have declared it to be a dying creed,* it is likely to remain a force to contend with for years if not for long decades to come.

LET ME try to specify with greater exactness the constituency for militant Islam. It is divisible into three main elements.

The first is the inner core, made up of the likes of Osama bin Laden, the nineteen hijackers, al Qaeda, leaders of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and the rest of the network of violent groups inspired by militant Islamic ideology. Such groups have mostly come into existence since 1970, becoming since then a more and more important force in the Muslim world. The network, dubbed the "Islamintern" by some Muslim critics, contains both Shiite and Sunni variants, appeals to rich and poor alike, and is active in such far-flung locations as Afghanistan, Algeria, and Argentina. In 1983 some of its members initiated a campaign of violence against the United States whose greatest triumph so far was the spectacular operation on September 11. In all, the network's adherents are as few as they are fanatical, numbering perhaps in the thousands.

The second ring comprises a much larger population of militants who are sympathetic to al Qaeda's radical utopian vision without themselves being a part of it. Their views were on display daily as soon as hostilities began in Afghanistan: protesters and mujahideen by the tens of thousands, all expressing a determined loathing of the United States and an enthusiasm for further acts of violence. Countries not normally heard from, and hardly hotbeds of radicalism, came to life to protest the U.S. campaign.

The chants of these Islamists across the world bore a certain family resemblance:

Indonesia: "U.S., Go to Hell!"
Malaysia: "Go To Hell America" and "Destroy America."
Bangladesh: "Death to America" and "Osama is our hero."
India: "Death to America. Death to Israel. Taliban, Taliban, we salute you."
Sri Lanka: "Bin Laden we are with you."
Oman: "America is the enemy of God."
Yemen: "America is a great Satan."
Egypt: "U.S. go to hell, Afghans will prevail."
Sudan: "Down, down USA!"
Bosnia: "Long live bin Laden."
United Kingdom: "Tony Blair burn in hell."

As best I can estimate from election data, survey research, anecdotal evidence, and the opinions of informed observers, this Islamist element constitutes some 10 to 15 percent of the total Muslim world population of roughly one billion—that is, some 100 to 150 million persons worldwide.

The third ring consists of Muslims who do not accept the militant Islamic program in all its particulars but do concur with its rank anti-Americanism. This sentiment is found at almost every point along the political spectrum. A secular fascist like Saddam Hussein shares a hatred of the United States with the far leftists of the PKK Kurdish group, who in turn share it with an eccentric figure like Muammar Qaddafi. Reliable statistics on opinion in the Muslim world do not exist, but my sense is that one half of the world's Muslims—or some 500 million persons—sympathize

* See my review of *The Failure of Political Islam* by Oliver Roy in COMMENTARY, June 1995.



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more with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban than with the United States. That such a vast multitude hates the United States is sobering indeed.

That is not to say, of course, that anti-Americanism is universal among Muslims, for important bastions of pro-American sentiment do exist. These include the officer corps of the Turkish military, who are the final arbiters of their country's destiny; several leaders of Muslim-majority states in the former Soviet Union; the emerging dissident element in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and, more generally, those Muslims who have experienced at first hand the dominion of militant Islam.

But these constitute a minority. Elsewhere, and everywhere, anti-Americanism rears its head: among the sheltered females of the Saudi elite and the male denizens of Cairo's vast slums, among the aged in remote reaches of Pakistan, and among the students at a Muslim school in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Nor is hostility always limited to feelings. Since Vietnam, and even before September 11, more Americans died at the hands of Muslim radicals than from any other enemy.

THE SITUATION, then, is grim. But it is not hopeless, any more than the situation at the height of the cold war with the Soviet Union was hopeless. What is required, now as then, is not just precision and honesty in defining the enemy but conceptual clarity in confronting it. And perhaps the first step toward that end is to understand that, paradoxical as it may seem in the light of the statistics I have presented above, Americans are *not* involved in a battle royal between Islam and the West, or what has been called a "clash of civilizations."

This famous term was first given wide currency by the political scientist Samuel Huntington. It has been seconded, in his own diabolical way, by Osama bin Laden. The idea exercises an undoubted appeal, but it happens not to be accurate. True, many Islamist elements do seek such a confrontation, out of a conviction that Islam will prevail and go on to achieve global supremacy. But several facts militate against so sweeping a view of the objective situation.

For one thing, violence against Americans—and against Israelis, Westerners, and non-Muslims in general—is just part of the story; Islamist enmity toward Muslims who do not share the Islamist outlook is no less vicious. Did not the Taliban reign in Afghanistan make this clear? Their multiple atrocities and gratuitous acts of cruelty toward their fellow Muslims suggested an attitude that bordered on the genocidal; what it felt like to be liberated from that repressive cruelty was well captured in a *New York Times* report from a town in Afghanistan on November 13:

> In the twelve hours since the Taliban soldiers left this town, a joyous mood has spread. The people of Taliqan, who lived for two years under the Taliban's oppressive Islamic rule, burst onto the streets to toss off the restrictions that had burrowed into the most intimate aspects of their lives. Men tossed their turbans into the gutters. Families dug up their long-hidden television sets. Restaurants blared music. Cigarettes flared, and young men talked of growing their hair long.

Nor are the Taliban an exception: militant Islam has brutalized Muslims wherever it has achieved power, and wherever it has striven for power. I have already mentioned Algeria, a country that, thanks to a decade of barbarity by Islamists, and with something like 100,000 fatalities and counting, has become a byword for violence against fellow believers. But comparable if smaller-scale orgies of killing have taken place in Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey. And what can one say of Islamist Iran's war on non-Islamist Iraq after 1982, with its hundreds of thousands of Muslim dead? Militant Islam is an aggressive totalitarian ideology that ultimately discriminates barely if at all among those who stand in its path.

Another reason to question the notion of a clash of civilizations is that it inevitably leads one to ignore important and possibly crucial distinctions *within* civilizations. Such distinctions emerged with particular poignancy in 1989, when a significant minority of Muslims around the world denounced the death edict issued by Ayatollah Khomeini against the novelist Salman Rushdie—in Iran itself, 127 intellectuals signed a protest against the Khomeini edict—even as more than a few prominent Westerners, secular and religious alike, were apologizing for it or finding some way to "understand" it. (In one typical statement, the president of the French bishops' conference explained that *The Satanic Verses* was an "insult to religion," as though this in some way accounted adequately for the threat on Rushdie's life.)

Or take an example nearer to home and closer in time. After September 11, polls in Catholic Italy found a quarter of Italians holding the view that Americans had gotten what they deserved. Even some Americans sided with the attackers, or at least with their choice of target: "Anyone who can blow up the Pentagon has my vote," announced a professor of history at the University of New Mexico. Does that make these people part of the Muslim world? And what about the tens and hundreds of millions of Muslims who were horrified by the suicide



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hijackings? Are they *not* part of the Muslim world?

This brings us to a large and closely related issue—namely, whether the problem is Islam itself. Like all great religions, Islam is susceptible of a number of interpretations, from the mystical to the militant, from the quietist to the revolutionary. Over a millennium and a half, its most basic ideas have been subjected to highly contrasting explications. That having been said, Islam also differs from other religions in that it includes a large body of regulations about public life that are quite at variance with modern sensibilities and that have not yet been left behind. In short, the hard work of adjusting Islam to the contemporary world has yet really to begin—a fact that itself goes far to explain the attraction of militant Islamic ideology.

That ideology is not an entirely new phenomenon. Its roots go back in some form to the Wahhabi movement of the 18th century, to the writings of Ibn Taymiya in the 13th century, even to the Kharijites of the 7th century. But, as befits a modern-style ideology, today's version covers more aspects of life (including, for example, the economic dimension) than any premodern iteration. It has also enjoyed much greater political success. A radicalized understanding of Islam has taken hold, possibly over a wider swath than at any other time in the fourteen centuries of Muslim history, and it has driven out or silenced every serious rival.

This radicalism is today's enraged answer to the question that has bedeviled Muslims for 200 years, as the power and wealth that once blessed the world of Islam dribbled away over the five centuries before 1800 and other peoples and nations surged ahead. What went wrong? If Islam brings God's grace, as was widely assumed, why do Muslims fare so poorly? Muslims turned to a number of extremist ideologies in the modern period—from fascism and Leninism to pan-Arabism and pan-Syrianism—all in an attempt to answer that question by almost any means other than introspection, moderation, and self-help. Militant Islam has turned out to be the most popular, the most deluded, and the most disastrous of these ideologies.

But the unprecedented nature of its dominance, ironically, offers hope. However ascendant the militant interpretation may be at present, it need not be so in the future. The terroristic jihad against the West is one reading of Islam, but it is not the eternal essence of Islam. Forty years ago, at the height of the Soviet Union's prestige, and during the heyday of pan-Arab nationalism, militant Islam had scarcely any political influence. What then happened to bring it to the fore is itself a fascinating question, but the point for our purposes is that, just as militant Islam was not a powerful force a scant four decades ago, it is perfectly reasonable to expect that it may not be a powerful force four decades hence.

By contrast, if today's extremism were truly inextricable from Islam, then there would be no solution but to try to quarantine or convert one sixth of humanity. To say the least, neither of those is a realistic prospect.

IF THE earth-shaking clash of our time is not between two civilizations, it is and must be a clash among the members of *one* civilization—specifically, between Islamists and those who, for want of a better term, we may call moderate Muslims (understanding that "moderate" does not mean liberal or democratic but only anti-Islamist). Just as the deviant Western ideologies of fascism and Communism challenged and shook and had to be expelled from the West, so it is with militant Islam and the Muslim world. The battle for the soul of Islam will undoubtedly last many years and take many lives, and is likely to be the greatest ideological battle of the post-cold-war era.

Where, then, does that leave us? The United States, an overwhelmingly non-Muslim country, obviously cannot fix the problems of the Muslim world. It can neither solve the trauma of modern Islam nor do a great deal even to reduce the anti-Americanism that is rife among Muslims. As the internal battle unfolds, non-Muslims will mostly find themselves in the role of outsiders.

But outsiders, and the United States in particular, can critically help in precipitating the battle and in influencing its outcome. They can do so both by weakening the militant side and by helping the moderate one. The process has in fact already begun in the so-called war on terrorism, and in miniature the results have been dramatically on display in Afghanistan. So long as Washington stayed aloof, the Taliban held sway in that country and the Northern Alliance appeared to be, and was, a hapless force. Once the U.S. military became involved, the Taliban crumbled and the Northern Alliance swept through the country in a few weeks. On the larger front the task is the same: weaken Islamists where they are in power, deter their expansion, and encourage and support moderate elements.

Weakening militant Islam will require an imaginative and assertive policy, one tailored to the needs of each country. Already the impress of American power has been felt in a number of places, from Afghanistan, where it toppled a government, to the Philippines, where $93 million in military and security aid, plus a contingent of advisers, is helping



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the government defeat a militant Islamic insurgency. In Pakistan, the FBI is training immigration officers to detect suspected terrorists infiltrating from Afghanistan. The anarchic areas of Somalia may be next on the list.

In some cases, change can be effected dramatically and swiftly; in others, the evolution will be long and slow. In Pakistan the state must be forced to take control of the notorious *madrasa*s (religious schools) that inculcate extremism and advocate violence. In Iran and Sudan, a far more vigorous and multi-pronged effort will be required to end the rule of militant Islam. In Qatar, the home of al-Jazeera television, Osama bin Laden's mouthpiece, pressure has to be put on the government to promote the teachings of a moderate sheikh rather than those of the entrenched and vastly influential extremist Yusuf al-Qaradawi ("On the hour of judgment, Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them").

Saudi Arabia is a special case, being the home of Osama bin Laden himself and fifteen of the nineteen suicide hijackers, the seedbed of the ideas that stand at the heart of the Taliban, and the source of much of the funding of Islamist networks around the world. Although Saudi authorities have managed a working relationship with the West for decades, they have also permitted the kingdom's public discourse to be taken over by militant Islam. It must be urgently expunged from a school system in which, for example, 10th-grade textbooks warn students that "It is compulsory for the Muslims to be loyal to each other and to consider the infidels their enemy," and from the media, not to speak of other areas of public life.

On other fronts, money centers around the world, from the United Arab Emirates to Hong Kong, will have to be forced to crack down on the laundering of funds via "Islamic charities" to al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. French President Jacques Chirac has acknowledged that "Europe has been a haven" for Islamic extremists; the problem has to be taken seriously, and acted upon.

The war against militant Islam has domestic implications as well, for the danger within is no less ominous than the danger abroad. The goal is to prevent harm being done by radical anti-Westerners among us, and the means must include expelling, jailing, or otherwise restraining them. This implies an active revision of immigration laws and in particular an end to the innocent assumption that all who intend to visit or immigrate to the United States wish the country well. It means adding an ideological filter to the admissions procedure and, in the President's words, "asking a lot of questions that heretofore have not been asked." It means enhanced border patrols; cracking down on Islamic "charitable" foundations that funnel money to militant Islamic groups; military tribunals where needed; restrictions on lawyer-client privilege in certain cases; and, when appropriate, the serious use of "profiling" to uncover sleepers and other terrorists. Most obviously, it means that the President must stop meeting with and legitimizing militant Islamic leaders as he has done repeatedly both before and after September 11.*

But let us not delude ourselves. If the United States has over 100 million Islamist enemies (not to speak of an even larger number of Muslims who wish us ill on assorted other grounds), they cannot all be incapacitated. Instead, the goal must be to deter and contain them. Militant Islam is too popular and widespread to be destroyed militarily. It can only be fended off.

To adopt the phrasing of George Kennan in "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," his famous 1947 article about the threat of Soviet Communism, the "main element of any United States policy toward [militant Islam] must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of [its] expansive tendencies." The goal must be to convince its adherents that the use of force against Americans is at best ineffectual and at worst counterproductive—that Algerians and Malaysians are entitled to their anti-American views, but they may not act on them by harming Americans. The only way to achieve this goal is by scaring them. And that requires toughness and determination—and perseverance—of a sort that Americans have not mustered for a long time. It will also require allies.

THAT IS where the moderate Muslims come in. If roughly half the population across the Muslim world hates America, the other half does not. Unfortunately, they are disarmed, in disarray, and nearly voiceless. But the United States does not need them for their power. It needs them for their ideas and for the legitimacy they confer, and in these respects their strengths exactly complement Washington's.

The U.S. government lacks any religious authority to speak about Islam, though it does not seem to realize this. Here is Osama bin Laden claiming that the world divides into good Muslims and evil non-Muslims, then calling for a jihad against the West; how can a secular Western government possibly respond? Assuredly not directly—although the administration has ineffectively tried to do just that.

* See my "The Danger Within: Militant Islam in America" in the November 2001 COMMENTARY.



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Thus, on November 3, Christopher Ross, a former U.S. ambassador, spoke on behalf of the U.S. government in Arabic for fifteen minutes on al-Jazeera television. His task? Nothing less than to rebut Osama bin Laden's accusations that America is the enemy of Islam. Ross also went on the offensive, telling his audience that the "perpetrators of these crimes have no regard for human life, even among Muslims," and that bin Laden was the real enemy of Islam.

Ross's appearance on al-Jazeera was just one of the many gambits developed by Charlotte Beers, the Under Secretary of State charged with getting America's message out to the Muslim world. Beers, formerly the head of J. Walter Thompson and Ogilvy & Mather and nicknamed the "queen of branding," is partly responsible for opening the Coalition Information Center (CIC), a public-relations "war room." With two dozen staffers, it offers daily and weekly talking points for journalists and has developed a campaign to convince Muslims of the benign American attitude toward them and their faith. It made sure that more humanitarian supplies were dropped in Afghanistan as the holy month of Ramadan began, sent a "catalog of [Taliban] lies" to Pakistani newspapers, and arranged for journalists from Muslim-majority countries to meet with U.S. policymakers. It is also using popular culture to shift perceptions in the Muslim world, by, according to *Variety*, encouraging dialogue between young American and young Middle Eastern viewers of the music video channel MTV.

With regard to Islam itself, CIC aims, in Beers's words, to make it "hard to miss" that Americans recognize and respect the religion. This means having public officials talk about the compatibility of American and Islamic values, sending out tapes of a Muslim imam delivering the invocation to Congress, and printing posters depicting "Mosques of America." Of particular note was the President's invitation to 50 Muslim ambassadors to break the Ramadan fast in the White House, with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and U.S. ambassadors around the world following suit. A senior State Department official explained the implausible goal of all this as demonstrating to the Muslim world that "Americans take [Islamic] holidays as seriously as they do Christian and Jewish holidays." Plans for the future are far more ambitious, centering around a Middle East Radio Network that is scheduled to start transmission in February with a plan to broadcast in 26 languages and an orientation toward Muslim youth.

Will these programs have the intended effect? Not likely. Put aside the more absurdist aspects—using MTV to build civilizational bridges, establishing that Eid ul-Fitr is as precious to Americans as Christmas. Even the Christopher Ross episode bombed: "His performance was terrible. . . . He was like a robot who speaks Arabic," commented one Arab critic. More profoundly, although the goal of CIC is a worthwhile one—this is, after all, a war of ideas—the premises of its campaign are deeply flawed. Someone other than Madison Avenue types, and other than Americans, will be needed to conceptualize and deliver the anti-bin Laden message, someone with the necessary Islamic credentials and deep understanding of the culture. That someone is the moderate Muslim, the Muslim who hates the prospect of living under the reign of militant Islam and can envisage something better.

WHEN IT comes to Islam, the U.S. role is less to offer its own views than to help those Muslims with compatible views, especially on such issues as relations with non-Muslims, modernization, and the rights of women and minorities. This means helping moderates get their ideas out on U.S.-funded radio stations like the newly-created Radio Free Afghanistan and, as Paula Dobriansky, the Undersecretary of State for global affairs, has suggested, making sure that tolerant Islamic figures—scholars, imams, and others—are included in U.S.-funded academic- and cultural-exchange programs.

Anti-Islamists today are weak, divided, intimidated, and generally ineffectual. Indeed, the prospects for Muslim revitalization have rarely looked dimmer than at this moment of radicalism, jihad, extremist rhetoric, conspiratorial thinking, and the cult of death. But moderates do exist, and they have much to offer the United States in its own battle against militant Islam, not least their intimate knowledge of the phenomenon and of its potential weaknesses. In addition, the legitimacy they bring to any campaign against militant Islam, simply by rendering the charge of "Islamophobia" unsustainable, is invaluable.

In Afghanistan, the United States first crushed the Taliban regime, then turned the country over to the more moderate Northern Alliance; it is up to the Alliance to make something of the opportunity the U.S. created. The same holds with Islam writ large. Washington can go only so far. Whether its military victories turn into political ones depends ultimately on Muslims. The fight against militant Islam will be won if America has the will and persistence to see it through, and the wit to understand that its message must be carried in the end by other hands than its own.



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# The Human-Rights Lobby Meets Terrorism

*Adrian Karatnycky & Arch Puddington*

In the months since the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the world's two leading human-rights organizations—Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch—have been very busy. And so they should have been. International law, to which these organizations are committed above all things, recognizes terrorism as a distinct and uniquely malevolent form of aggression against civilians; and the attacks themselves assuredly constituted a massive and horrendous violation of human rights, unprecedented in the history of the United States.

Yet, from the steady stream of reports, statements, and open letters the organizations have sent to leaders like President Bush and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, one learns little of this. Although both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have issued denunciations of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, not once have they spoken about the precise nature of these vicious acts, or called them by their proper name: terrorism. They have raised many concerns, to be sure, but terrorism itself has not been part of their agenda.

To understand what is going on, it helps to have some idea of how most of the human-rights community has treated this question in general in recent years—and also how it has treated the United States of America.

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It turns out that the organizations' reluctance to use the word "terrorism" is not new. One can examine the hundreds of documents that Amnesty International has issued over the years on countries and regions victimized by terror, from Colombia and Kashmir to Spain and Great Britain, without *ever* encountering a straightforward reference to the term. Instead, one reads of "brutal" or "horrific" acts, or of "violent assaults"—phrases that could apply as easily to the aggression of one army against another as to the deliberate murder of civilians by political or religious extremists.

Occasionally, human-rights organizations have resorted to almost comical euphemisms. In speaking of the "war on terrorism," Human Rights Watch has preferred to describe it as the "war against indistinct enemies." As for those cases when the word simply cannot be avoided, Amnesty International has invariably placed it in quotation marks, thus implying its own skepticism.

Pressed to explain this policy of evasion, spokesmen for major human-rights organizations argue that the term "terrorism" lacks a clear definition in international law—which happens not to be the case. There are, in fact, several UN-sponsored agreements, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, that speak



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forthrightly of terrorism as a distinct and widely agreed-upon category of aggression. A better explanation can be found in the human-rights community's profound distrust of the governments around the world that face a terrorist threat—and in the reluctance to acknowledge that security is essential to any meaningful idea of freedom.

It seems that, whatever havoc terrorists may wreak on a society, the more serious human-rights problem in the eyes of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch lies in the methods that public authorities have adopted to combat these "indistinct enemies." Nowhere has this attitude been more pronounced than in the way human-rights groups have treated the challenge posed by radical Islam, which everywhere has resorted to terror as a basic tactic. In a revealing statement, Kenneth Roth, the director of Human Rights Watch, observed last May that "violent Islam [today] is the Communism of ten years ago." By this he appeared to mean not only that radical Islam was a spent force, like Soviet Communism in 1990, but that apprehensions about it were greatly exaggerated, and as likely as not were being invoked by governments only as an excuse for repression.

Is this true? Let us consider, to begin with, Algeria and Uzbekistan, two places whose governments have been ruthless in dealing with violent Islam.

For most of the past decade, Algerian society has been brutalized by a fanatical and murderous movement of Islamic extremists. Islamic guerrillas have routinely invaded villages deemed unsympathetic to their cause, slaughtering an estimated 100,000 men, women, and children. The response of the Algerian government has been, by any measure, ferocious. It has tortured or killed its enemies and harassed or imprisoned journalists and public figures who have criticized official policies.

From the standpoint of human rights for Algerian society as a whole, however, there can be no doubt that the triumph of the government is preferable to the triumph of its terrorist adversaries. Yet the overwhelming thrust of the criticism issued by the human-rights lobby has been directed at that government. Far more important to these groups than the extraordinary death toll exacted by terrorism has been the state's unwillingness to prosecute abusive members of its own security forces. Missing, too, from the analysis of the major human-rights groups has been any acknowledgement that the Algerian government, having vanquished a formidable enemy, is moving gradually toward national reconciliation and the relaxation of state control.

A similar myopia has afflicted the organizations' treatment of Uzbekistan, a country with its own deplorable record of human-rights violations. Uzbekistan's president, Islam Karimov, is one of Central Asia's most pitiless strongmen, having retained power by jailing and torturing peaceful political opponents and making others "disappear." His crimes have been chronicled and denounced by human-rights investigators with justifiable regularity. But Karimov has also used the same tactics against threats to his power of an entirely different sort.

The most fearsome of these threats has come from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a radical guerilla group that, with the assistance of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, has sowed terror not just in its own country but throughout Central Asia. Uzbekistan has also seen the emergence of the Party of Liberation (Hizb-ut-tahrir), a fanatical Islamist group that operates through secretive five-man cells in more than a dozen countries, including Great Britain and Germany (where it is likely to have influenced Muhammad Atta and the other hijackers who attended German universities). Avowed supporters of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, members of the Party of Liberation reject democracy, religious freedom, human rights, and participation in political institutions they consider tainted by unbelief. If they have not yet joined the armed opposition in Uzbekistan, it is because their tenets permit violence only when there is a likelihood of overthrowing the ruler.

Predictably, President Karimov has resorted to repression against the Party of Liberation and has jailed many of its followers without a semblance of due process or fair trial. In their assessments of Uzbekistan, however, both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch treat these jailed Party of Liberation members not as would-be terrorists but as prisoners of conscience. They are routinely described as nothing more than "pious Muslims," "men who prayed at home or in small private groups," "nonviolent religious Muslims," or "those who belonged to unregistered Islamic organizations." Entirely lacking is any serious description of the ideology of the Party of Liberation, its clandestine methods, or the danger that it might pose.

Since Algeria and Uzbekistan are violent and autocratic regimes, it may not be surprising—but it is deplorable—that the human-rights community should have declined to recognize their legitimate security concerns. In both situations, the task



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is to choose between the lesser of two evils, which is hardly these organizations' forte. What, then, about the one case—Israel—in which a genuinely open and democratic society has also long confronted a threat to its survival from Islamic terrorists?

In recent years, the major human-rights organizations have been forthright, it is true, in denouncing the most heinous attacks committed by Palestinians. The suicide bombing of a busy pizza parlor, or the ambush of a school bus filled with children—these are unacceptable in their view, even if such acts, too, have never been described as terrorism. But these acknowledgements of barbarism are the exception. In report after report, the burden of responsibility for the violence, upheaval, and killing in the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly during the *intifada* unleashed just over a year ago, has been placed squarely on the shoulders of democratic Israel.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have issued protests against virtually every policy adopted by Israel in its effort to prevent further terrorist attacks against its citizens. Traffic blockades, border closings that keep Palestinians from reaching jobs inside Israel, restrictions on Bir Zeit University in the West Bank—all, we have been told, are violations of one or another fundamental human right. As for Israel's policy of seeking out and killing Palestinians who have participated in terrorist operations—a policy designed to avoid further civilian casualties—this, too, has come under severe criticism.

Indeed, although it is the Palestinians who have made an explicit strategy of drawing civilians on both sides into the heart of the bloody conflict, it is the Israelis who, in the reports of these groups, are much more likely to be blamed for civilian deaths. Thus, Israeli military authorities are censured for permitting "indiscriminate" firing into areas containing Palestinian civilians, while little is said of the Palestinians' intentional use of such neighborhoods as shields for their gunmen. Human-rights organizations have paid special attention in recent years to the use around the world of child soldiers, especially by irregular forces; but they have said nothing about the Palestinian practice of putting children in the front lines of violent demonstrations, a policy designed to create young martyrs and thus further inflame Palestinian and Islamic opinion.*

The dismaying stand taken by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch is best symbolized in their agenda with respect to the leaders of the two sides. Both groups have called for a criminal investigation of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for his role in the killings by Christian militiamen that took place in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982—killings for which Sharon, even according to his most severe critics, bears only indirect responsibility, and which were reviewed some time ago by an independent commission of Israel's democratic government. And Yasir Arafat? Somehow, neither of the leading human-rights groups has seen fit to demand *his* indictment for heinous crimes against humanity committed not simply on his watch but at his explicit direction, extending back in time for decades, and by now too numerous to catalogue.

IN THE wake of September 11, one might reasonably have expected Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to entertain second thoughts about their assessment of Islamic extremism. For, as we have had bitter reason to learn, the comparison of radical Islam to Communism has turned out to be in many respects quite relevant, if not in the sense construed by the human-rights community.

Like its worldwide Communist predecessor, Islamism functions by combining the armed struggle of a few militants with a support network whose hands reach around the globe. It too presents a major challenge to established democracies and an ominous threat to governments that are weak or whose grip on power is insecure. Perhaps most pertinent of all, it employs methods that present extraordinary challenges to traditional military or police tactics.

But the major human-rights organizations have in fact not reconsidered. To judge by what they have said since September 11, they are far from recognizing the character of the enemy against which the civilized world now finds itself arrayed. Instead, at the core of their response has been a fear not of that enemy but of the *United States*, and in particular of the American reaction—or, as many seem to believe, overreaction—to the events of September 11.

Thus, the initial declarations of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch focused on expectations of an upsurge of anti-Muslim hate crimes here at home, of racial profiling by law-enforcement

* In yet another example of the breathtaking double standard they apply to the conflict, both organizations have also endorsed the "right of return" for Palestinians who have left Israel proper since 1948. What they blithely ignore is that most of these Palestinians fled at the insistence of their own leaders, that hundreds of thousands of Jews were themselves expelled from Arab countries upon Israel's creation, and, most of all, that so massive an influx would threaten, and may be designed to threaten, the very survival of Israel.



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officials, and of the mistreatment of immigrants. Subsequently, the organizations have attacked the temporary detention of suspects without charges and the establishment of military tribunals for trying terrorists—both of which they consider violations of fundamental rights. Human Rights Watch has gone so far as to issue a lengthy document reminding the Bush administration—to which the news will no doubt come as a thunderclap—that international law prohibits the torture of prisoners.

To be sure, other commentators have raised objections to various anti-terrorism measures introduced by the administration. But what distinguishes the human-rights world is its insistence on denouncing each and every proposal to secure the domestic front. This apprehension has been matched by concerns over the conduct of the war in Afghanistan itself, and other measures by the U.S. and its allies to destroy terror networks.

Initially treating the attack of September 11 as a problem in law enforcement, Amnesty International urged President Bush to join with the United Nations in "bring[ing] those responsible . . . to justice within the framework of a fair and accountable criminal-justice system, and with full respect for international standards for a fair trial." Amnesty International went on record opposing the extradition to the U.S. of Osama bin Laden and other terrorists should they be captured—unless the administration could guarantee that they would not face the death penalty.

Once it became clear that the United States intended to use its military might to hunt down al Qaeda and remove its Taliban protectors from power, the human-rights world trained its spotlight on America's tactics. Under international law, Human Rights Watch stressed, it was illegal to assassinate Osama bin Laden or other terrorist leaders. The organization likewise issued several urgent protests over America's use of cluster bombs, and, in one rather exotic statement, warned that the war was placing the rights of Afghan women in special peril because, among other things, the head-to-toe burkhas they were compelled to wear under the Taliban made it difficult for them to move quickly.

Of particular concern to both major human-rights organizations were reports of civilian deaths during the American bombing campaign. Amnesty International called for "an immediate and full investigation into what may have been violations of international humanitarian law" arising from U.S. military actions, and it also objected to the Pentagon's decision to bomb radio stations that were serving as propaganda vehicles for the Taliban leadership. This, according to Amnesty International, was insufficient justification for launching attacks on "civilian objects."

At one crucial point in the conflict, Amnesty International even insisted that special monitors be appointed to oversee the transfer of arms from the United States and other countries to Northern Alliance commanders, with a mandate to keep the guns away from commanders deemed unsuitable because of past human-rights abuses.

Afghan civilians did of course die from errant bombs in the initial phases of the war; the incidents were well publicized and, in fact, rare. But the reports from human-rights organizations conveyed no sense of the care that the United States took to avoid targets in civilian areas. Nor did they bother to acknowledge more generally the other steps taken by the Bush administration to protect and promote basic rights both here and abroad—at least as far as innocents are concerned. So relentlessly critical have been the world's two leading voices for human rights and the expansion of liberty as to raise a question about their attitude toward the United States itself.

That question is, alas, all too easily answered. In the reports published in recent years by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, America emerges not as the land of the free but as a country where human rights, especially those of racial minorities, immigrants, and asylum-seekers, are routinely and massively violated. It is the home of rampant police abuses, execrable prison conditions, and, according to Amnesty International, a "culture of death" because of the barbaric practice of capital punishment. It is a place that has shamefully refused to sign a number of international human-rights treaties. And it is a country that, according to a sweeping indictment issued in 1999 by Amnesty International, deserves to be grouped with Tibet and Rwanda as a target of international protest and concern.

It has become a commonplace to say that, in matters of foreign policy, "everything changed" after September 11. Yet for important segments of the human-rights world, clearly, nothing has changed at all. That the principal human-rights organizations should be singling out the United States as an international scofflaw was reprehensible enough yesterday. Today, it raises powerful doubts as to their fundamental sense of judgment, and says everything one needs to know about their political drift.



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# Surfing the Novel

*Joseph Epstein*

READING NOVELS has so long been a habit of mine that by now it qualifies as a full-blown addiction. My modus operandi is to alternate between the new and the old; frequently I have bookmarks in both simultaneously, hoping to keep up with the latest offerings while attempting to fill in some of the many gaps in my reading before I depart the planet. To this day, I feel a tug of guilt over never having read Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), though I hope to get around to it presently. Onward and outward.

When it comes to older novels, my principle of selection has been set by the test of time, that soundest of all critics. A much trickier matter is to decide which contemporary fiction merits attention. One can go by the reviews; or by having seen a novelist's work in a magazine one trusts; or by the general buzz in the weekly supplements or the intellectual journals; or by whim and fancy. But the supply itself seems endless.

As a reader, I am in the position of a man on his couch, remote control in hand, contemplating the hundreds of channels available for viewing. Click—the English novel: Amis, Barnes, McEwan, Banville, Byatt, Drabble, Lanchester. Click—the Asian and third-world novel: Achebe, Ishiguro, Rushdie, Roy, Pamuk. Click—the Latin American novel: Garcia Marquez, Vargas Llosa, Cortázar, Fuentes, Paz. Click, click, click—the major American networks: Bellow, Roth, Updike, Mailer, Pynchon, DeLillo, Munro, Lurie, Ozick, Irving. Click—the Discovery channel of younger novelists: Wallace, Goodman, Gurganus, Simpson, Chabon. And on and on into the night.

What am I looking for here? Nothing much, and yet everything: amusement, an expanded knowledge of how other people live—and lived—and, chiefly, those truths of the heart that, for complicated reasons, are otherwise hidden from us and unavailable anywhere else but in literature. In short, a few honorable writers who come close to capturing and conveying life as it really is, who are *dans le vrai*.

The sheer plenitude of what is on offer, presumably a blessing, can also operate as a discouragement. This phenomenon is not entirely new. In the issues of the London *Times Literary Supplement* of March 19 and April 2, 1914, under the title "The Younger Generation," Henry James, then nearing the close of his own career, took up the matter in his characteristically complex manner. He began by bemoaning—most mellifluously—the want of serious criticism and the damaging effect this had on the creation of fiction itself. For criticism, James had no doubt, was at the heart of "the very education of our imaginative

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life; and thanks to it the general question of how to refine, and of why certain things refine more and most, . . . becomes for us of the last importance." Yet the sheer number of new books was even then causing criticism to shirk its responsibility. "The flood of 'production,'" James wrote, "has so inordinately exceeded the activity of control that this latter anxious agent, first alarmed but then indifferent, has been forced backwards out of the gate, leaving the contents of the reservoir to boil and evaporate."

So, too, and a thousand times more, it seems in our day. We have among us acknowledged masters that no one seems to read, along with young geniuses whose achievements, declared daily, weekly, or monthly, go untested by critical minds. Nearly ten years ago, shortly before the inauguration of President Clinton, I was called by the American correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph* to comment on the work of Maya Angelou, who was scheduled to read a poem at the ceremony. I said I could not do so, because I had not read her. Then could I supply the name of someone else who had? I confessed I knew no such person. But, queried the correspondent, since I was a literary man, and presumably had literary friends, how did I account for this? I answered by saying that I thought Maya Angelou was not actually for reading, but instead for being assigned to high-school and college students to show that their teachers' hearts were in the right place.

I wonder if the same is not true of the novels of Toni Morrison, who has won the Pulitzer, Nobel, and just about every other prize, but whose work has scarcely (with one or two notable exceptions) been subjected to serious criticism. I have never met a reader who has derived pleasure from the novels of Joyce Carol Oates, yet she continues to publish novel after novel, at a rate slightly faster than most office temps can type. John Updike has by now published more than 40 books of fiction; some are quite good, some disappointing; but who reads them, and who, besides their graphomaniacal author, needs them all? Meanwhile, more and more novels continue to be written, published, stocked in the major chains, awarded prizes, turned into paperbacks, made into movies. The flood, the boil, the evaporation, in Henry James's deluvian metaphor, roil on.

Novelists' reputations today seem to be established largely through the mechanisms of marketing and the buddy system: by their blurbs shall ye know them. Everyone who writes a novel hopes to bang the gong of large-scale success—a huge advance, a movie deal, a high print-run. "A good writer is a rich writer," Lewis Lapham has ruefully remarked, "and a rich writer a good writer." The line between serious and unserious, between highbrow and middlebrow, between literary and commercial is increasingly blurred. The downmarket writer Stephen King now publishes in the *New Yorker*; were Ezra Pound alive, he might, who knows, go on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, or at least on *Larry King Live*. Yet this great fluidity has hardly improved the general quality of things. The English literary historian Derwent May put it succinctly in his recent history of the *Times Literary Supplement*: "No outstanding new poet or novelist appeared on the scene in the 90's, as far as we can tell."

WHICH IS not to say that there have been no candidates. Among novelists in this country who emerged in the 1990's, two at the moment stand out: Jonathan Franzen and Richard Russo. Franzen has published two previous novels, is forty-two and was born in the Midwest; Russo, who has published four previous novels, is fifty-two and was born in upstate New York. Each has lately produced what is called a "breakout" novel: a thick book that comes at the reader with all literary guns firing. This is the book that, if it succeeds, will put its author on the intellectual map, jump him up to the ranks of the established names. In Franzen's case, it appears to have succeeded.

*The Corrections** has not only been on the best-seller lists for many weeks but has won the National Book Award for fiction. But in a nice illustration of the prevailing confusion, its author is probably best known for his run-in with Oprah Winfrey, the television talk-show hostess and, in a market-dominated scene, the nation's most powerful literary critic, whose endorsements are said to sell more books than any other source, or combination of sources, in America.

Miss Winfrey put her foot all the way down on the accelerator for *The Corrections*. "A masterpiece," she declared. "Funny, familiar, insightful, and disturbingly real all throughout. Not a false note in all 568 pages of the book. When critics refer to 'The Great American Novel,' this is it, people." With this endorsement in hand, Franzen's publisher immediately ordered a second printing of 500,000 copies, which, once sold,

* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 568 pp., $26.00.



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would put roughly another $1.5 million in the novelist's pocket. The additional copies carried on the front of the dust jacket what is, in effect, the Oprah seal of approval: a largish letter O. All this, at least at first, positively unmanned Jonathan Franzen, who protested that he wished his book to go unadorned into the world and that, having written a work of "high" literary art, he would decline to appear on Oprah's television show.

An artist can say almost anything he wants these days as long as he manages not to commit the cultural sin of elitism. Instantly the denunciations of Franzen shot forth. To add insult to hypocrisy, they came not from the great unwashed but from many of Franzen's fellow writers, who promptly derided him as a prig, a snob, a fully stuffed shirt. Franzen immediately climbed down: "Mistake, mistake, mistake to use the word 'high,'" he told a reporter from the *New York Times*. "Both Oprah and I want the same thing and believe the same thing, that the distinction between high and low is meaningless." Another rainy day in the Republic of Letters.

Luckily for Franzen, copies of *The Corrections* do not come with the preface, titled "Perchance to Dream," that he wrote and published in *Harper's* (April 1996) five years before the book's appearance. In this great clown's baggy pants of an essay, Franzen pulls out every rubber chicken, toy trumpet, and whoopee cushion of literary snobbery of the past 40 years. He complains about how television and computers have swept away the old audience for novels; about the "technological consumer" economy; about the fast pace of the culture, which makes it impossible for a novelist to bring (in the words of a critic named Sven Birkerts) "meaningful news about what it means to live in the world of the present"; about the disappearance of a serious audience anywhere for serious writing. At no extra charge, he even throws in a perfectly irrelevant swipe at Justice Clarence Thomas.

What he had really set out to create, Franzen tells us in this essay, was a book that would "infiltrate the national imagination" and be challenging, galvanizing, and subversive in the way of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*—which is a clue in itself to Franzen's literary temper. But after much travail—"exactly how much less novels now matter to the American mainstream than they did when *Catch-22* was published is anybody's guess," he writes—the recognition finally came that "at the heart of my despair about the novel had been a conflict between my feeling that I should Address the Culture and Bring News to the Mainstream, and my desire to write about the things closest to me, to lose myself in the characters and locales I loved." Enlightened at last, he chose the latter by jettisoning his "perceived obligation to the chimerical mainstream," and, lo, his "third book began to move again."

THIS THIRD book, *The Corrections*, is about the fate of a Midwestern family for whom the infelicitous label "dysfunctional" could have been invented. Dysfunctional the Lamberts surely are, in the sense that nothing ever works out for the father, Alfred, the mother, Enid, or their three now-grown children, Gary, Chip, and Denise. But a more precise word for this family than dysfunctional may be grotesque.

Among Enid Lambert's complaints is that she and her husband are "the only intelligent people of her generation who had managed not to become rich." Enid is a piece of work, mother of the year in hell. She is a bad cook, near crazed in her financial pettiness, a relentless hounder of her children (her daughter Denise cites her imposition of an "Islamic female dress code" when Denise was in high school), no comfort whatsoever to her husband, in a state of permanent denial about all unpleasant possibilities, a control freak made all the nuttier because in her family she has in fact lost all control. So perfectly does Enid Lambert embody the qualities of the Jewish mother as caricatured in contemporary fiction that *The Corrections* ought to receive a special award from the Anti-Defamation League—call it the Sophie Portnoy Prize—for having resisted the temptation of making her Jewish.

Each of the three Lambert children represents an emblematic variant of life in the 1990's—for *The Corrections* is a highly schematic effort to show what happened to the American middle class during that socially unmoored decade. Gary, the eldest, a graduate of Wharton, works as an investment banker and has married a woman with a generous trust fund. Chip, the middle child, is an untenured academic, a Foucaultian who is writing a screenplay and does "cultural studies" with a specialty in the significance of television commercials in the age of late capitalism. Denise, the youngest, holds one of those approved downward-mobility jobs as a chef in a series of gastronomically with-it restaurants in Philadelphia.

Alongside these professional résumés, the



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three younger Lamberts sport gaudy psychosocial ones. Gary is an uxorious depressive, verging on the compulsive; Chip has been sex-crazed since childhood and is without the least shred of a sense of responsibility; Denise, once married and immensely attractive to men, discovers that she is happiest as a lesbian. Parents and children are at various times on one or another sort of pill for reasons medical, emotional, or sexual, and these pills are only one of the many "corrections" to human nature that have given Franzen his title. And that, as they say on the studio lot, is a wrap.

The *pater familias*. Alfred Lambert grew up during the Depression in a harsh rural background, was once employed as an engineer on a major Midwestern railroad, and is now retired, broken in health by Parkinson's disease, with Alzheimer's coming up fast on the outside. He is also a man with a strong sense of honor, who keeps his own counsel. Alone among his children, Denise has some notion of his deep reserve, while the elder son feels that his father disapproves of his wheeling and dealing and the younger son, too busy thinking himself misunderstood, does not much go in for troubling to understand others.

The plot of *The Corrections*, such as it is, hinges on Enid Lambert's wish to have her children home for one last Christmas before her husband's health caves in completely. A small and reasonable enough request, one might think, were it not for the distaste the Lambert children feel for their parents and the disabling psychological baggage they have acquired out in the world. On this flimsy clothesline Franzen hangs the story of the lives that Gary, Chip, and Denise have made for themselves, in all their garish detail. Owing to these details, and before I knew I was going to write about it, I had ceased reading *The Corrections* on page 321—that is, just after having been treated to a scene of Alfred, on a Scandinavian cruise ship with his wife, engaged in a terrifying struggle with his protective diapers and conducting an imaginary conversation with his own feces.

Jonathan Franzen, make no mistake, is a talented writer, with all the many moves of the contemporary novelist. He can do fancy fornication, anarchic humor, different cities (New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis), the police in a thousand voices. He has wide knowledge of how things work in the worlds of upscale restaurants and goofy leftist academic circles, and even knows a thing or two about investment banking. He includes in the novel a jaunt to Lithuania, where Chip helps operate an Internet scam for an entrepreneurial fraud named Gitanas and thereby enables his creator to get in a few shots at American capitalism.

In his *Harper's* essay, Franzen mentioned wanting to write about "the things closest to me, to lose myself in the characters and locales I love." Despite the improbably warm conclusion he supplies for his novel—Alfred having finally been put in a nursing home, the family, in a fashion, rallies 'round—his characters have long since lost their color by having been thoroughly rinsed in contempt. If the contemporaneity of their lives holds one's interest, one is nevertheless unlikely in the end to care very much for or about them. Missing from this novel is something vital, which literary talent alone cannot supply.

That something was intimated by Matthew Arnold in an 1887 review of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, which Arnold had read in French translation and which blew him away. In this novel Matthew Arnold found what millions of readers have found after him: "great sensitiveness, subtlety, and finesse, addressing themselves with entire disinterestedness and simplicity to the representation of human life." In his essay, Arnold devotes a paragraph to comparing Tolstoy's treatment of the theme of romantic love and adultery in *Anna Karenina* with Flaubert's treatment of the same theme in *Madame Bovary*. By contrast with Tolstoy's novel, he judges Flaubert's to be a work of "petrified feeling," over which, as Arnold writes, there "hangs an atmosphere of bitterness, irony, impotence; not a personage in the book to rejoice or console us; the springs of freshness and feeling are not there to create such feelings."

Jonathan Franzen is not Gustave Flaubert, except perhaps in his dreams, and I suspect Richard Russo will forgive me for saying that neither is he Leo Tolstoy. But there is indeed a freshness of feeling to Russo's *Empire Falls** that is entirely absent from *The Corrections* and that evokes, in contemporary terms, precisely what Arnold was getting at.

This is all the more impressive since the *mise-en-scène* of Russo's novel is itself almost unrelievedly bleak. A town in Maine that sits on a polluted river and has lost its industry and its hope, Empire Falls is not merely in danger of going down the crapper but, at one point late in the

* Knopf, 483 pp., $25.95.



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novel, is actually compared by Miles Roby, the book's central character, to the very thing down which it is headed: "This crapper, it occurred to Miles [inspecting broken plumbing], was his hometown in a nutshell. People who lived in Empire Falls were so used to misfortune that they'd become resigned to more of the same."

The dying town of Empire Falls is controlled by the widow of a dynastic family, the Whitings, whose men have displayed a knack for marrying women they soon learn to despise, to the point of longing to kill them. As for the other townspeople, some of them are still there because staying even after the jobs left "was easier and less scary than leaving," while some stayed out of pride, because their parents and grandparents had lived in Empire Falls and because they did not want to be driven away by the greed of outsiders. Among them all, the future is the least used tense. "Ambition," the father of a local cop liked to tell his son: "It'll kill you every time."

Miles Roby's own father is an itinerant and highly inept housepainter ("By the time they'd discover his shoddy work in Boothbay, he'd be painting someone else's windows shut in Bar Harbor"), a drinking man, and a sponge whose two-word philosophy of life is, "So what?" Miles himself, in his early forties when the novel begins, is about to be divorced and is the father of a talented but psychologically fragile adolescent daughter. He is out of shape, no great sexual athlete, a man who left college to tend to his dying mother and never subsequently escaped the trap of his hometown.

This mother was a saintly woman who believed that we are all put on earth to make things more fair. "We have a duty in this world, Miles. You see that, don't you?" she told him when he was still young. "We have a moral duty." Dying of cancer in her forties, she has left Miles with a strong case of terminal decency.

At the heart of the plot of *Empire Falls* is the mysterious connection between Miles and the wealthy widow Francine Whiting, for whom he runs a bar and grill. She both encourages and taunts him; he lives in simultaneous thrall and contempt of her. What the novel slowly reveals is that Miles's mother once had a love affair with Mrs. Whiting's long-dead husband—an act about which his mother feels forever remorseful while the quite remorseless Mrs. Whiting prefers, instead, revenge, served cold and parsimoniously and taken out, decades after the affair, on her husband's lover's son.

*Empire Falls* is an intricately plotted novel, with lots of back story to fill in the earlier lives of the main characters. The intricacy of the plot allows Russo to arrange things so that the unpredictable is made to seem entirely plausible, which is one of the things that good fiction accomplishes. But what gives *Empire Falls* gravity is its persuasive staging of the struggle of a decent man to do the right thing, which means to put those he loves before himself. "Her heroes may be insipid," Virginia Woolf once wrote of the novels of Jane Austen, "but think of her fools!" Fools aplenty there are in this novel, but in Miles Roby, Richard Russo has created a hero not in the least insipid. Because of this, *Empire Falls* possesses the element that is entirely missing from *The Corrections*: a moral center.

A fine equanimity pervades *Empire Falls*. This no doubt has much to do with its author's not having set out to mock his characters or to show the height of his superiority through the depth of his disdain. But it is far from a solemn book. A wry comedy animates plot and characters alike. "You're kind and patient and forgiving and generous," Miles is told by a waitress at his restaurant, "and you don't seem to understand that these qualities can be really annoying in a man, no matter what the ladies' magazines say." According to the same waitress, customers tend to tip in proportion to bra cup size. Miles himself remarks that his years in college, away from town, were like being in a witness protection program. But beyond the comedy, Russo is implicated in the lives of these characters in a way that implicates us, his readers: his major effort is to understand them—and to understand that this understanding, too, has its limits.

This is a novel in which God figures. Miles Roby, a former altar boy, still goes to Mass. His manner of tithing is to paint the decaying exterior of the town's Catholic church for nothing. He believes in God, though prefers to think of Him as all-loving rather than all-knowing. One gathers his position here is shared by Richard Russo. Understanding, in this novel, is in the nature of the human struggle, and, like that struggle itself, is never complete on this earth.

WANT TO make God smile, an old joke has it, tell him your plans. Life, or so this novel instructs, is immensely complicated for people who wish to live it other than selfishly: an obstacle course in which desire is every day set in an unending match against duty. The power of *Em-*



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*pire Falls* lies in its capacity to return us to this daily scene of moral conflict in a manner that is genuine, gripping—and entirely believable.

"If making things prettier than they are is a lie," says Miles Roby's sixteen-year-old daughter, Tick, "then making them seem uglier is another." She is speaking about painting, but the same goes for novelists. The point is to get those "things" as nearly right as possible, to get as close as one can to being *dans le vrai*. This is never easy, but one of the ways a novelist may know he is at least on the right track is when neither Oprah nor the committee of the National Book Awards singles him out for honors.

In a scene in *Empire Falls* set in one of the town's working-class bars, a moper at the end of the bar, forced to watch Oprah Winfrey on television, complains: "If we got to listen to a fat woman talk, can't she at least be a white one?" To which the barkeeper, a Polish woman in her sixties, replies: "Oprah's smarter than any five white men you can name, Otis." And more influential, she might have added, than any twenty literary critics you never heard of.



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# Succeeding Giuliani

*Fred Siegel*

THE BEST preparation for entering the barely believable world of New York City politics is an evening of Gilbert and Sullivan. *Topsy-Turvy* is the title of Mike Leigh's recent movie about the great British comic-opera pair, and it fits: in the topsy-turvy plot of *The Pirates of Penzance*, for example, Frederic, a ship's apprentice, finds that because he was born on February 29 in a leap year, he will not be eligible to marry until he is eighty-four.

A similar upside-down logic seemed to govern this past fall's mayoral race in New York. In the course of it, Mark Green, a quintessential Manhattan Left-liberal and longtime foe of the New York City police force, was transformed by adversaries on his left flank into an Upper-East-Side version of the late Governor George Wallace, while Al Sharpton, a racial demagogue who once helped instigate the murder of seven people in a clothing store in Harlem, managed to define himself as a civil-rights activist. In the meantime, a liberal businessman named Michael Bloomberg was able to pull off an upset victory as the candidate simultaneously of the law-and-order voters who were the bedrock constituency of outgoing Mayor Rudolph Giuliani—and of Sharpton and his allies.

In the wake of the devastating events of September 11, it is perhaps understandable that Gotham's topsy-turvy politics should have been invisible to the rest of the country. For New York had become, overnight, "the hero city," Mayor Giuliani was "America's mayor," and New Yorkers, traditionally reviled by much of the nation, were America's darlings. The seemingly deep divisions between the interior portions of America, which a year earlier had voted for George W. Bush, and the coastal states that voted for Gore, seemed to have disappeared. In Boston's Fenway Park, where the fans still smart from the deal that sent Babe Ruth to New York in 1920, and where the usual chant is "Yankees Suck, Yankees Suck," the crowd broke into a spontaneous rendition of "New York, New York."

But if a feeling of harmony and common purpose reigned everywhere else, it was conspicuously absent in New York's Democratic party, then in the midst of a bitter battle for the mayoral nomination. In most cities, primaries are open to all voters, regardless of their party affiliation. This tends to produce relatively moderate mayors. New York is different, and the difference (especially in a city where winning the Democratic nomination has often been tantamount to election) makes a difference. In brief, it gives disproportionate weight to the party's organized left wing and to figures like Sharpton who can mobilize a small but swingable block of voters. Any Democrat who wants to run for higher office now has to kiss Sharpton's ring.

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SO MUCH by way of background. This year's Democratic primary started off with four candidates, each of them a longtime officeholder forced to move out by the city's term-limits law. Since there was no black candidate, much of the ensuing contest was driven by the scramble to secure black votes.

Of the four candidates, Alan Hevesi, the city's chief financial officer, was initially considered the front-runner, and enjoyed the backing of the teachers' union and the social-service industry. Hevesi had distinguished himself in the past by keeping his distance from Sharpton, but in the course of the election year he quickly reversed course, going before Sharpton's core supporters to confess his past failure to recognize that police brutality was indeed pervasive in the city. Hevesi's candidacy never recovered from this abrupt and transparently cynical mea culpa.

Of the remaining three candidates, one, Peter Vallone, was unable to attract significant black support and, despite hints of support from Mayor Giuliani, was never in the hunt. That left Mark Green and Fernando (Freddy) Ferrer. The first was a reform Democrat who had served as commissioner of consumer affairs in the left-leaning mayoralty of David Dinkins in the early 1990's and thereafter held the elected post of public advocate; the second, a Democratic regular with a strong Latino base, was the borough president of the Bronx. Green had spent the previous eight years appealing to African-American voters through frequent church appearances and even more frequent criticisms of Rudy Giuliani, and now, with Hevesi gone, looked all but unbeatable. Ferrer had flopped as a mayoral candidate in the Democratic primaries of 1997, when he could not decide whether to run as who he was or as a third-world revolutionary; in 2001, he had settled, rhetorically at least, on the revolutionary.

The big surprise of the primary campaign was Ferrer's late success in cobbling together an alliance with Sharpton and edging out Green in the first round of voting, which took place prior to September 11. There had been attempts in the past at forming a black-Latino coalition, but these had always foundered on mutual distrust. This time, Ferrer and his closest ally, the Bronx Democratic chairman Roberto Ramirez, saw that things might be different. Their campaign was based on an "us-versus-them" theme that mobilized resentments that are never far from the surface in New York.

Defying the conventional wisdom, according to which the Giuliani years were the best of times for the city, Ferrer campaigned as the spokesman of the "other New York": the blacks and Latinos who he insisted—contrary to most evidence—had been left out of the boom of the 90's. His Democratic rivals, Ferrer said, were "candidates of continuity"; instead, he would govern as the anti-Giuliani. In the primary contest this was a brilliant ploy, and, despite record levels of employment in New York, despite the city's unprecedented drop in crime, it worked.

Ferrer's anti-Giuliani message not only solidified the often fractious Latino base but drew in both Sharpton and Charles Rangel, a leading figure in the Congressional Black Caucus. Ferrer made a particular point of associating himself with Sharpton on the issue of crime. Here was more topsy-turvy: thanks to Giuliani's policies, the number of police killings in the city had fallen even more rapidly than the reductions in crime; but thanks to Sharpton, who has made a career in the ambulance-chasing of incidents like the tragic police killing of the West African immigrant Amadou Diallo in 1999, a rich font of anti-cop (plus anti-Giuliani and anti-white) sentiment has formed on this issue in the black and Hispanic communities, into which Ferrer was able to tap at will.

As for Rangel, who once upon a time saw to it that no new business entered Harlem without paying tribute to himself and his friends, he, too, quickly played the race card. "How do you"—that is, you white candidates—"feel our hurt?" he asked, inviting Green and the others to imagine what it was like for blacks and Hispanics "when you go to apply for a job and you see three whites there and you know before the interview that you're not going to get it." The same sort of tactic, employed by Jesse Helms, had earned the Republican Senator widespread opprobrium; but racism committed by non-whites evidently does not qualify as racism, especially in New York.

As things fell out, not even September 11 could displace race-baiting in the city. Last year's municipal elections in Cincinnati and Cleveland, which pitted black against white candidates, were remarkably free of racial rancor. New York, however, is frozen in the tropes of the late 1960's, and many of the key players on today's scene, including Sharpton and Rangel, came of age in that punishing era and have never really left it.

But this requires a brief look backward.

STARTING IN the mid-1960's, racial violence or the threat of it became an integral component of New York politics. These were the years when



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the city was governed by John V. Lindsay, a liberal Republican with movie-star looks and an impeccable WASP pedigree who took over the mayoralty in a surge of hopefulness and, after two terms, left behind him a city thoroughly polarized along racial lines and well on the way to fiscal insolvency. I have written about the legacy of the Lindsay years in *The Future Once Happened Here: New York, D.C. and the Fate of America's Big Cities* (1997); more recently, they have been given impressive and readable treatment by Vincent J. Cannato in *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York*.* The issues on which Cannato focuses bear directly on the city's current ills.

Private-sector jobs in New York increased rapidly during Lindsay's first term, which happened to coincide with a roaring national economy. But government jobs and welfare rolls increased even more rapidly, particularly after Lindsay, in a gesture of racial contrition, set about intentionally doubling the number of people on welfare. Between the effects of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and Lindsay's break-neck spending, a new political figure—the "poverty-crat"—emerged in a town that had once been run by Tammany Hall. This new class of operators took advantage of federal programs and local social-service grants to create patronage empires like the Hunt's Point Multiservice Center, which in the early 1970's had a $4-million budget and a payroll of almost 300. Hunt's Point, by the way, is in the Bronx; to understand the politics and economy of Freddy Ferrer's borough, one must look back to Lindsay.

To pay for all his social spending, Lindsay instituted radically higher taxes, a move that had dire consequences when recession hit in 1969. During earlier downturns, New York had suffered *less* than the rest of the country. This time, New York lost jobs at three times the national rate; during the recession of 1973-75, in the immediate aftermath of Lindsay, it lost jobs at six times the national average. But by then Lindsay was gone, leaving the roof to fall in on the head of his successor, the hapless Abe Beame.

I have not mentioned the lawlessness of the Lindsay years, which drove out both businesses and once-loyal citizens. Asked why so many big corporations—American Can, Pepsi-Cola, Olin Mathieson, and others—were fleeing, one business consultant listed not only the high cost of doing business in New York but "the commut[ing] problem, the rising crime rate, swollen welfare rolls, and the [1966] subway strike." Corporate executives and the middle class had clearly arrived at the same conclusion about the city's future.

John Lindsay's greatest boast was that New York never suffered a riot on his watch. It is true that rioting never reached the level of Los Angeles or Detroit. But as Cannato shows, there were indeed race riots in East New York, East Harlem, and the East Village, in Flatbush, Brownsville, and Bedford-Stuyvesant, not to mention smaller riots at City Hall perpetrated by, for example, the city's very own Neighborhood Youth Corps. As mayoral aide Ted Mastroianni would later acknowledge: "We had some major problems. We always called them disturbances [rather than riots]. Molotov cocktails were always designated as unidentified objects . . . and the press would go along with it." Murder rose by 137 percent in the Lindsay years, a rate of increase second only to Detroit's.

In the face of the violence, the Lindsay administration's governing principle was, to use Tom Wolfe's phrase, "steam control." When asked about the torn-up meadows in the city's parks, August Heckscher, a countercultural aristocrat appointed by Lindsay to be his parks commissioner, responded that "parks ought to be the safety valve for all this protest." Vandalism, Heckscher went on, was "simply a way in which certain elements of my constituency used the parks. . . . Some people like to sit on the benches; others like to tear them up." Another Lindsay aide, Barry Gottehrer, put the Yippies' Abby Hoffman on the city payroll as a "community liaison": Hoffman and his friends repaid the favor by scratching "F—k You" in giant letters on the walls of Grand Central Terminal.

No confrontation in the Lindsay years cost the city more than the fight over school "decentralization." This ferocious conflict pitted the largely Jewish members of the United Federation of Teachers against black nationalists backed by Lindsay and the Ford Foundation, who together had created separatist, city-funded schools in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn. Union members were fired by the black-nationalist administrators of the district, and in the strikes that followed, teachers were threatened and beaten. The public schools, once the finest big-city system in the country, have never recovered.

"What I learned from Ocean Hill-Brownsville," explains Al Sharpton, who is a far slicker version of Sonny Carson, a thuggish black demagogue of that era, "was that confrontation works."

THE GIULIANI years excepted, confrontation does indeed work in New York. Racial confrontation brought down Ed Koch (1978-89), helped

* Basic Books, 720 pp., $35.00.



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David Dinkins become mayor (1990-93), and then undid Dinkins after four riot-torn years. In this past autumn's race, the outcome was eventually decided by a racial confrontation between Ferrer and Mark Green.

As I indicated earlier, Green lost narrowly to Ferrer in the first round of voting. But with exit polls suggesting that most of Hevesi's and Vallone's voters would switch to him, he looked like a good bet to win the runoff. Then came September 11, by coincidence the day on which the voting was scheduled to take place (it was of course rescheduled). The world shifted, and a whirlwind of topsy-turvy began that would end by capsizing the mayoral hopes of Mark Green.

In the wake of the September 11 catastrophe, Giuliani, whose popularity had soared, began to talk of staying on for a third term. Rebuffed on this front—a third term was prohibited by law—he next turned more sensibly to the idea of a 90-day extension of his administration, something for which the state's constitution made ample provision. Candidate Green agreed with this idea, as did the Republican contender, Michael Bloomberg. But Ferrer said no. His rejection was couched in terms of "democracy" and a willingness to "stand up" to Giuliani's bullying, though his real concern no doubt lay elsewhere. (Reconstruction contracts for lower Manhattan were likely to be bid out during Giuliani's extended term, and Ferrer and his allies were not about to let the biggest pot of gold since Medicaid slip through their fingers.)

The flap over Giuliani's 90-day extension highlighted a large and increasingly visible distinction between Ferrer and Green. Whereas the former's response to September 11 was essentially to ignore it—"the towers have crumbled but our priorities have not," ran his politics-as-usual mantra—Green unveiled what seemed to many New Yorkers to be a wholly new political persona. To be fair, it was new, but not wholly new: for some time, Green had been undergoing a transformation from a standard-issue liberal of Lindsayite stripe to a Clintonite looking to modernize, and to moderate, New York's public-sector party. But September 11 brought the new Mark Green to the fore.

Like Clinton, Green was now asserting that "the era of big government is over," and, in a reversal of his long-held stand against welfare reform, announcing that "those who can work should work." A year-long effort at reaching out to a police force of which he had been a staunch critic now won him the support of William Bratton, Giuliani's first police commissioner and the architect of the city's crime-reduction program. Over and over again after September 11, Green emphasized the importance of restoring lower Manhattan and of revitalizing the city's private-sector economy.

In short, and improbable though it seemed at the time, the liberal Democrat Mark Green was looking, and sounding, like a legitimate claimant to the legacy of Rudy Giuliani. But it was not to be. Although he did squeak to a victory over Ferrer in the runoff primary that was eventually held in October, he ended up paying dearly in the coin of Democratic solidarity. Ferrer, Sharpton, and the hard-liners in the party took Green's support for the Giuliani extension as a defection and a betrayal. And then they upped the racial ante.

In the closing days of the primary campaign, Green had run an ad quoting a *New York Times* editorial to the effect that Ferrer's non-response to September 11 had been "borderline irresponsible." The ad elicited a *faux* firestorm. Even before the primary runoff votes were counted, Hazel Dukes, the former head of the New York NAACP and a woman who in 1997 admitted to embezzling $13,000 from a leukemia-stricken associate, was characterizing it as a "lynching" and "the height of racism." "I woke up," she averred, "and thought I was in Mississippi." The rest of the Ferrer team chimed in, with Sharpton thundering that "there will not be silence and consent to the insult that we've been dealt" and the union leader Dennis Rivera, a key player in Ferrer's campaign, declaring that Green "has a lot of work to do. All is not well in the Democratic party."

All this could have been written off as part of the usual pre-election bargaining. If Green expected to win the mayoralty with the support of Ferrer, Ramirez, and Sharpton, they were expecting something in exchange: notably, patronage appointments and a say in policy in a Green administration. Racial threats were their way of signaling the power they held over the outcome of the balloting. The trouble came when, just like Giuliani before him, Green refused to play, and the rest of the script unfolded like clockwork. On election day, Ramirez closed Bronx Democratic-party headquarters, while most of the union leaders who had endorsed Green either made only token efforts on his behalf or sent mixed messages to their memberships after learning that—unlike Green—the Republican candidate Michael Bloomberg was willing to do business.

And that is how New Yorkers woke up on the morning of November 7 to learn that Bloomberg, a billionaire businessman and lifelong liberal De-



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mocrat who had switched parties a year earlier for the sole purpose of running for office, was their new mayor. Not even Bloomberg's ad man, David Garth, who has worked for the winner in seven of the last nine mayoral elections, thought he had a chance. But thanks to a late but ringing endorsement from Giuliani, thanks to a well-spent cool $70 million—and thanks to Rangel, Sharpton, Ramirez, and the rest—it all fell into place.

During the last stages of the campaign, Charles Rangel was asked what he would do if Mark Green failed to make amends for his perceived slight to Freddy Ferrer. Would he go so far as to support the Republican Michael Bloomberg? Rangel suggested he just might. "Wasn't John Lindsay a Republican?" he asked.

WHICH BRINGS us to the puzzle now before us. Almost no one, not even Michael Bloomberg, has a clear idea of what it will be like to govern New York at a time when the city is hemorrhaging jobs and revenue, and when the dragon of racial resentment threatens to raise its head once more. But no one mindful of New York's history of confrontation, or attentive to Bloomberg's post-election moves, can be hopeful.

Overconfident after his razor-thin victory, Bloomberg quickly went out of his way to distance himself from Rudolph Giuliani, telling a *New York Times* columnist that the man who rescued New York from crime and oversaw its financial rejuvenation had not been all that important to his win; meeting with Al Sharpton; and making early appointments of figures recycled from the Dinkins, Koch, and Lindsay administrations. Some of Bloomberg's more conservative supporters in the incoherent coalition that backed his race will no doubt be kept on board through personal loyalty. Others, representing organizations that have been the beneficiaries of his charitable largesse, will also have their reasons to stick. But still others, like the unions, will be very difficult to satisfy. Although he has so far demonstrated the same talent for salesmanship that made him such an effective businessman, maintaining the support of both Giuliani voters and the Ferrer/Sharpton bloc may be a task beyond the power of any salesman.

One test will inevitably come with some future incident involving the New York City police. A larger test will be dealing with a recession and a massive budget shortfall while also coping with the problem of the city's infrastructure—its power, telecommunication, and transportation systems. These, owing to the devastation of September 11, are at center stage for the first time in 40 years. Their rehabilitation, together with the rebuilding of the area around ground zero, is a task of unimaginable proportions for a city that, even under Giuliani, and even in an era of prosperity, was unable to build public pay toilets.

In fact, only one figure in New York's past comes to mind as someone up to this task. That is Robert Moses, the master builder who in the distant days of the 1930's, 40's, and 50's held twelve public jobs, some simultaneously, controlling parks, sewers, highways, and public housing and displaying both the willingness and the capacity to shove aside anybody, or any neighborhood, that got in the way of his automobile-friendly projects. Moses, as arrogant and unaccountable as he was accomplished, gave hundreds of parks and other great public works to the city and state of New York, including Riverside Park, Jones Beach, and the Triboro Bridge. But today, remembered for his ruthless tactics, he remains a figure of infamy. Only recently, Moses was made the villain of the final two episodes of Ric Burns's public-television special, *New York: A Documentary Film*, where he was demonized as a traitor to the urban ideal and blamed for everything from rising crime rates and black-family breakdown to neighborhood dissolution and lost jobs.

Robert Moses was finally driven from power during John Lindsay's first term as mayor. Ever since that time, the city has had trouble even maintaining its infrastructure, much less building anything new. But in the wake of September 11, and in more senses than one, New York needs to be rebuilt. Michael Bloomberg is no Robert Moses. Nor has he so far shown a marked disposition to follow in the political footsteps of his immediate predecessor, Rudy Giuliani. Where, in the topsy-turvy world of New York, does that leave us?



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OBSERVATIONS

# The Tehran Temptation

*Michael Rubin*

SHOULD THE United States seek a rapprochement with Iran? After more than two decades of enmity, this question is now very much before us.

Speaking at the United Nations in early November, the Iranian president, Mohammed Khatami, announced that the "nation of Iran has no problem with the people and the nation of America." In light of the unending flow of vituperation that Iran has poured out on the "Great Satan," these were startling words. But the U.S. government, for its part, has hardly been slow in responding. Shortly after Khatami's speech, Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Iranian foreign minister shook hands at a diplomatic gathering in New York, the first such moment since 1979 when 52 American diplomats were seized and held hostage in Iran for fourteen-and-a-half months.

What has given fresh impetus to the cause of engagement with Iran is, of course, September 11. Iran, a country of Shiite Muslims, adjoins Afghanistan, and was itself long locked in conflict with the Sunni Taliban. To the advocates of rapprochement, it was clear that the enemy of our enemy could be our friend, a supplier of intelligence, and perhaps even a friendly base from which U.S. forces could launch missions to rescue American pilots in trouble. And such cooperation, it was hoped, could bloom into something much fuller and friendlier, reducing and eventually ending the acrimony of the past.

In line with this understanding, and after consultations with Washington, Jack Straw, the British foreign minister, embarked on a hastily arranged visit to Tehran in a post-September 11 effort to enlist it in the worldwide "coalition" against terrorism. Others in the foreign-policy establishment soon signed on. "It seems to me there is a possibility for at least a limited amount of cooperation" with Iran, said Brent Scowcroft, a former national-security adviser to George Bush and a man with close ties to George W. Bush. Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania opined that "we ought to consider turning over a new leaf and having a conversation" with Iran. More pointedly, the Yale diplomatic historian, John Lewis Gaddis, has lately complained that even as Iran has been "moving toward free elections and a parliamentary system," the United States has still done "nothing to adjust policy."

Given the apparent logic of the argument, and the pressure building behind it, the case for rapprochement would seem to have a lot going for it. Clearly, something is happening inside Iran, as the election of Khatami would alone suggest. Ever since 1992, the European Union has been pursuing trade relations and conducting a "critical dialogue" with the hardline mullahs, and Gaddis is not the only American foreign-policy expert to argue that we should have been doing the same. Writing before the war, Graham Fuller, a former high-ranking intelligence official and now a political scientist at RAND, contended that confrontational American policies had been self-defeating, serving only to strengthen the hardliners, spurring Iran to obstruct the Middle East

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peace process, and causing "significant" tension between the United States and its European allies.

Whatever the merits of these particular arguments, there can be no question that commercially, diplomatically, and militarily, the United States has a stake in the future of Iran, or that promoting liberalization within that strategically vital country is in our national interest. What *is* questionable—especially in light of the failure of the European approach to affect Iranian behavior in the least*—is whether "engagement" is the best way to shape developments there to our advantage.

THERE ARE certain facts that even the most ardent proponents of engagement with Iran do not dispute. Perhaps the most significant such facts concern Iran's own relationship to terrorism. "I want to state that under no conditions will we allow any terrorists, as individuals or groups, to enter Iran," President Khatami recently assured a reporter interviewing him for the *New York Times*. "There are no terrorists in Iran."

Either Khatami has his own private definition of terrorism or he was being facetious. In either case, a rather different picture is painted by the U.S. State Department in its most recent annual report on terrorism, issued last April. According to that report, Iran is nothing less than the world's "most active state sponsor of terrorism."

Much of Iran's pro-terrorist energy is taken up, in the words of the report, by "unrelenting hostility to Israel":

> Iran has long provided Lebanese Hizbullah and the Palestinian rejectionist groups—notably Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, and Ahmad Jibril's PFLP-GC [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command]—with varying amounts of funding, safe haven, training, and weapons.

But Israel hardly exhausts Iran's interest in promoting terrorism. The country has "also provided a lower level of support—including funding, training, and logistics assistance—to extremist groups in the Gulf, Africa, Turkey, and Central Asia," and has even maintained its thirteen-year-old threat against the novelist Salman Rushdie. As the report notes, "the decree [calling for Rushdie's death] has not been revoked, and the $2.8 million bounty for his assassination has not been withdrawn."

Beyond the transgressions enumerated by the State Department are other troubling facts. The Iranian government is implicated in the 1996 bombing of a U.S. Air Force barrack in Saudi Arabia. At the time, the State Department indicated it had "specific information with respect to the involvement of Iranian government officials"; two years earlier, James Woolsey, then the director of the CIA, had declared that Iranian terrorist attacks were "not acts of rogue elements" but were "authorized at the highest levels of the Iranian regime." Iran today continues to shelter suspects implicated in terrorism directed against Americans, including seven of the 22 men on the FBI's "most wanted" terrorist list issued in the wake of September 11.

One of these men is Imad Mughniyeh, regarded by many specialists as a menace in a class with Osama bin Laden. Born in 1962 in Lebanon, Mughniyeh was a founding father of the terrorist organization Hizbullah. He reportedly masterminded the suicide bombings of the U.S. embassy in Beirut in 1983 as well as attacks against both American and French Marine barracks later that same year. He was the key planner of a series of kidnappings of Westerners in Beirut in the early 1980's, and is believed to have personally tortured and murdered William Buckley, the CIA station chief there. In June 1985, Mughniyeh was one of three Hizbullah activists who hijacked a TWA jetliner, killing an American passenger. He also allegedly helped to conceive and carry out the bombings in Buenos Aires of the Israeli embassy in 1992 and of the Jewish cultural center two years later. Since 1991, Mughniyeh has called Iran home.

ALONG WITH sponsoring terrorism and sheltering terrorists, Iran has acquired a sinister reputation in yet another critical area: weapons of mass destruction. According to recent congressional testimony by the CIA's John Lauder, Iran has "ambitious development programs for missiles and weapons of mass destruction" and is avidly seeking "technologies related to missiles, as well as technology related to nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, from a number of foreign sources."

What has it accomplished? On the nuclear-weapons front, this much is known:

> Iran is actively pursuing the acquisition of fissile material and the expertise and technology necessary to form that material into nuclear weapons. As part of this process, Iran is attempting to develop the capability to produce both plutonium and highly enriched uranium.

Nor are Iran's successes limited to the nuclear sphere. In chemical warfare (CW), it "already has produced a number of CW agents, including nerve, blister, choking, and blood agents." In the realm of biological warfare (BW), it has investigated "both toxins and live organisms as BW agents."

Finally, Iran is far along in developing the means to deliver whatever nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons it obtains. "Iran's ballistic-missile program is one of the largest in the Middle East," according to

* For a discussion of the pitfalls of European diplomacy, see "Why Iran is (Still) a Menace" by Joshua Muravchik and Jeffrey Gedmin in the July 1997 COMMENTARY.



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Lauder, with hundreds of short-range ballistic missiles now in its arsenal and longer-range and even intercontinental missiles under development. For disseminating CW and BW agents, Iran already has ample means, including artillery and aerial bombs.

IN THE spheres of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, then, Iran is already a menace to its neighbors and soon will be a menace to the entire world. To some, these facts only make the case for engagement all the more compelling; it would be, they say, the best means of tempering the country's ambitions (and incidentally of monitoring its activities). And besides, both Iranian society and Iranian politics have been undergoing profound changes that make the moment ripe for rapprochement.

On this last point the advocates of engagement are certainly right: change is indeed under way in Iran. Only, it is not always in the direction that they suppose, as I can attest on the basis of two extended spells in that country.

My first visit was in 1996, when the president was the relatively hardline Hashemi Rafsanjani. Throughout my stay I was free to roam the streets and to visit friends in both government offices and their homes. My second visit took place three years later, when Khatami was well into his first term—and the situation had changed considerably for the worse. Religious police were conducting more round-ups in the streets; the authorities were actively seeking to restrict the movements of visiting American students; and on more than one occasion Iranian friends politely suggested that lunch in a hotel might be safer for them than inviting an American to their home or office. That is still the way things are today.

The origins of the current, more fearful climate are not hard to grasp. As weariness and disillusionment with strict Islamic rule have taken hold of Iranian society, so too has the wrath of the mullahs and of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Sensing power slipping from their grasp, the clerics are determined to retain it, come what may.

They know they have their work cut out for them. The anti-American diatribes emanating from Tehran's government-controlled media notwithstanding, most Iranians these days are not seething with hatred for the United States. Neither would it be fair to say that they are ambivalent. The simple fact is that most Iranians are zealously, outspokenly, pro-American. American fashions and American popular music are in. Scholarships to study at American universities are prized, green cards doubly so. *Baywatch* seemed to be playing on television in almost every home I visited.

This, however, is far from the whole story. In south Tehran, as in every Iranian city, there are impoverished neighborhoods where the radicals and the paramilitary bands readily find recruits. This underclass is a minority, but it is a disproportionately influential one, and the clerics who draw political sustenance from it are the men who wield real power in Iran today.

True, Iran has an elected parliament and an elected president, just as the proponents of engagement assert. But these are less the appurtenances of a working democracy than the trappings of a theocratic dictatorship seeking to present itself as a democracy. True, too, there is a genuine reform movement in Iran, whose adherents have won elections by increasing majorities. But this again is not the decisive thing, and will not be until the theocrats and the paramilitary formations that back them resolve to hand over power and fade away. So far, in all important respects, they remain firmly in control.

At the same time, and despite the large electoral margins by which he won the presidency, Khatami appears to be rapidly falling from grace among the same middle-class citizens who have been his most fervent supporters. Soccer riots this past October, which received only passing notice in the Western press, were of seismic significance in this respect: along with chants of "death to Khamenei," another slogan heard coming from the crowd was "death to Khatami."

Although Iranians do not express it in these terms, Khatami is emerging as a kind of Gorbachev figure, a man struggling desperately to repair and rescue the ailing theocratic system of rule by giving it a human face. He is commonly perceived in the West as a "moderate" or a "liberal," but these words, if they apply at all, must be understood in a context very different from our own. On some matters, as the State Department's annual report on terrorism makes clear, Khatami and Khamenei are not dove and hawk but birds of a feather.

Thus, to the hardliner Khamenei, Israel is a "cancerous tumor"; to the moderate Khatami, an "illegal entity." Both men are part and parcel of a government openly committed to "continue its campaign against Zionism until Israel is completely eradicated." Both are part and parcel of a government that recently convicted thirteen Iranian Jews on entirely baseless charges of spying for Israel. Over the past eighteen months, the government they head has closed more than 50 newspapers. In November, Iran's judiciary began the largest trial of political dissidents in the two decades of Islamic rule, with over 60 defendants facing possible death sentences. Only recently, the police seized thousands of satellite dishes and closed Internet-service providers in a (futile) attempt to seal off news of the outside world.

BOTH THE deepening crackdown and the rising unrest in Iran present opportunities for the U.S.—and dangers as well. Whether it was



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Jimmy Carter's national-security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in the days prior to the hostage seizure in 1979, or Ronald Reagan's national-security adviser Robert McFarlane at the height of the Iran-Iraq war, previous American efforts to seek accommodation with Iran's ayatollahs have not only failed, but failed miserably, leaving us worse off than before and enhancing the power of our adversaries.

The Iranian people are at long last openly showing their discontent with the repression and misery in which they live. Is this the moment for Washington to firm up ties with a government that shows signs of teetering, and may actually have begun to fall? Eliot A. Cohen, writing recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, cut to the core of the matter:

> We can either make tactical accommodations with the regime there in return for modest (or illusory) sharing of intelligence, reduced support for some terrorist groups, and the like, or do everything in our power to support a civil society that loathes the mullahs and yearns to overturn their rule. It will be wise, moral, and unpopular (among some of our allies) to choose the latter course. The overthrow of the first theocratic revolutionary Muslim state . . . and its replacement by a moderate or secular government would be no less important a victory in this war than the annihilation of bin Laden.

This is not the first time we have been tempted to extend an olive branch, and a helping hand, to a militant anti-democratic dictatorship, only to have the branch rebuffed and the hand bitten. The war on terrorism has opened up real possibilities for radical change in Middle Eastern politics, and not least in Iran. It would be worse than a shame if, for the sake of avoiding hard decisions, we were to choose the route of accommodation and appeasement, and betray both our own interests and the millions of Iranians who may today constitute the most pro-American people in the entire world.



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MUSIC

# The Last German Master

*Terry Teachout*

FEW REPUTATIONS in classical music have fluctuated so widely as that of the German composer Paul Hindemith. From the mid-1920's on, he was acknowledged both as one of the key modernist composers of the 20th century—a peer of Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók—and as a teacher and theorist whose influence on younger musicians was unrivaled. His stock rose still higher when, as one of the relatively few prominent non-Jewish artists to leave Nazi Germany, he emigrated to the U.S. in 1940 to teach at Yale.

As a young man Hindemith was considered a musical radical. But in his middle years he rejected atonalism, the hermetic form of musical modernism associated with the name of Arnold Schoenberg, and later in life he outspokenly declared nontonal music to be "a mental activity scarcely superior to the invention or solution of a crossword puzzle." Thanks to these and equally sharp statements about the avant-garde trends that had succeeded atonalism, younger composers responded in turn by dismissing the music of Hindemith's middle years as passé, and the critical line on his work—and thought—likewise changed accordingly. By the time of his death in 1963, performances of his music were far less frequent than they had been as late as the 1950's, and *The Craft of Musical Composition*, the treatise in which he had set forth his belief in the absolute primacy of tonality as a method of musical organization, ceased to be read.

Hindemith's story is not an unfamiliar one. Most of the composers who dominated classical music in the 1930's and 1940's underwent similarly harsh criticism after the war, and for similar reasons. But his eclipse has outlasted the collapse of the avant-garde and the revival of tonality, two events that have triggered a revaluation of the older tonal modernists. Benjamin Britten and Dmitri Shostakovich, for example, now seem well on the way to winning general acceptance as major composers. But Hindemith's music, except for two or three orchestral pieces, is still rarely performed professionally in the U.S.*

On the other hand, scholarly interest in Hindemith is on the upswing. In the past decade and a half, the first English-language edition of his correspondence has been published, as well as an important biographical study by Luther Noss, *Paul Hindemith in the United States*. In addition, the second edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, published earlier this year, contains an unexpectedly sympathetic article on Hindemith by Giselher Schubert, based in large part on recent research.

Whether this activity will lead to more performances of Hindemith's music remains to be seen. But it has already given us a clearer view of his life and character, and the figure who has emerged turns out to be more complicated—and in certain ways much more impressive—than had previously been suspected.

PAUL HINDEMITH was born in Hanau, a factory town near Frankfurt, in 1895. Though his musical gifts

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* Recordings of several of Hindemith's most important compositions are discussed in the discography at the end of this article.



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were evident from an early age, he was not a full-fledged prodigy, nor was his background in any way auspicious; his father was a house painter, and his mother came from a family of shepherds. In later life, he preferred not to talk about his youth and refused to cooperate with biographers, but it is evident that his father pushed all three Hindemith children (of whom Paul was the eldest) toward musical careers in order to make money off them.

From the Frankfurt Children's Trio, an ensemble organized by his father, Hindemith went to the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, where he studied violin and took intensive training in composition. He joined the orchestra of the Frankfurt Opera in 1914, becoming its concertmaster three years later and meeting (and impressing) such noted conductors as Wilhelm Furtwängler and Willem Mengelberg. Though his career was interrupted by military service in World War I, he spent much of his time in uniform playing music.

As it happened, Hindemith was performing Claude Debussy's String Quartet with a group of German soldiers when they were informed of the French composer's death. This event, taking place in the midst of a conflict in which Germany and France were bitter and bloody foes, made a deep and lasting impression on him. He later recalled:

> It was as if our playing had been robbed of the breath of life. But we realized for the first time that music is more than style, technique, and the expression of powerful feelings. Music reached out beyond political boundaries, national hatred, and the horrors of war. On no other occasion have I seen so clearly what direction music must take.

Upon returning to Frankfurt, Hindemith switched to the viola, the deeper-voiced brother of the violin, making it his main instrument. At the same time, he began to concentrate on composition. He had already written a large amount of fluent if derivative music before the war, but now the outlines of an individual style began to emerge. He also embarked on a program of self-education—learning Latin, among other things—that was intended to plug the gaps in his sketchy schooling.

BY THIS time, the modern movement in art was starting to have a noticeable impact on Austro-German composers, who had previously dominated Western classical music for upward of two centuries. Many younger musicians—though by no means all—believed that post-Wagnerian romanticism had exhausted itself, and were looking for new alternatives. This is where Arnold Schoenberg came in. Intensifying still further the already ambiguously chromatic tonal language of Wagner's influential opera *Tristan und Isolde*, Schoenberg found a way to break with tonality altogether. By 1920, he had worked out a method of nontonal harmonic organization, the 12-tone system, with which he hoped (in his own memorably hubristic phrase) to "ensure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years."

The angst-ridden emotional climate of Schoenberg's atonal music was of a piece with the late-romantic expressionism that had already come to the fore in both Germany and Austria. But Schoenberg's renunciation of tonality appealed to few other composers, and several young German artists, led by Paul Hindemith, chose to chart a different course.

Hindemith began writing pieces that were at once distinctively modern and clearly inspired by baroque polyphony and the musical forms of the 17th and 18th centuries. They included his Third String Quartet (1920), the song cycle *Das Marienleben* (1922-23), and a series of chamber concertos published under the collective title of *Kammermusik*. Some of these pieces, like the popular *Kleine Kammermusik* for wind quintet (1923), were tart and witty, while others, like the Third Quartet and *Das Marienleben*, had a strongly expressionistic flavor. But in all his music of the 20's, Hindemith remained faithful to the laws of tonality—a tonality, to be sure, far more complex and wide-ranging in its implications than that of, say, Schumann or Brahms, but nonetheless grounded in the traditional harmonic usage of Western classical music.

The anti-romantic style in which Hindemith and other like-minded German composers of the time were working was briefly known as the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or "new objectivity." But composers in other countries, most notably Igor Stravinsky, were writing in much the same vein, and the resulting international movement, which came to be called "neoclassicism," soon evolved into a significant force in music between the wars.

Hindemith's embrace of neoclassicism was the turning point in his career. From the outset, he had seen himself not as a world-saving musical messiah but as a hard-working craftsman who hoped for inspiration but was prepared to make do without it if necessary. The neoclassical aesthetic, with its emphasis on craft and control, suited his no-nonsense temperament. Starting in 1927, he had also taught composition, first at the Berlin Musikhochschule and later at Yale. Asked why he chose to devote so much time and energy to this activity, he answered with typical straightforwardness: "I don't get ideas just sitting around waiting for them. They come from somewhere, and I get them teaching."

This earthy practicality was also connected with Hindemith's long experience as a performing artist. Even after he became a famous composer he continued to appear professionally as a conductor and violist (he gave the world premiere of William Walton's Viola Concerto in 1929). He was just as happy com-



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posing for children or amateurs as for world-famous soloists and orchestras, though it exasperated him when the term he used to describe these unassuming pieces—*Gebrauchmusik*, or music for use—was taken up by hostile critics and applied to his more ambitious efforts as well.

But if Hindemith was in some things the soul of practicality, he was also an idealist: one who believed passionately in the power of music to embody visions of a transcendent spiritual order, accessible to all men in all conditions. This was the possibility he had first glimpsed while wearing a German uniform and playing the music of the French nationalist composer Debussy. "People who make music together cannot be enemies," he once remarked, "at least not while the music lasts." Though not a religious believer in the conventional sense, he had a deep-seated mystical streak that seemed oddly incongruous with his half-brusque, half-jolly personality. As he grew older and more introspective, the streak became more pronounced.

Hindemith's idealism led early on to a conscious attempt to refine his compositional style. As early as 1925, he had told his publishers that he was striving to attain "the highest degree of purity and orderliness" in his music. Within a few more years, as the hectic 1920's gave way to the stormy 1930's, the remnants of expressionism heard in the Third Quartet, as well as his efforts to incorporate elements of jazz and popular music into his musical language, had given way to a simpler style, better suited to the metaphysical questions that increasingly preoccupied him. His sharp-angled melodies were now flavored by touches of German folksong and hymnody, and his austere harmonies became more mellifluous without losing any of the immediately distinctive quality that had already become his "signature."

The key work in this transformation was the opera *Mathis der Maler* (1933-35). Written to the composer's own libretto, *Mathis* uses the life of Matthias Grünewald, the 16th-century German altar painter, as the basis for a parable about the place of the artist in society. In the opera, Grünewald gives up painting to become involved in the Peasants' War, with disastrous results; St. Paul then comes to him in a vision, ordering him to "go forth and create," and he resolves to renounce the temptations of politics and reconsecrate himself to the art that is his true calling.

Like virtually all of Hindemith's theatrical works, *Mathis der Maler* has failed to hold the stage (though it was produced to impressive effect by the New York City Opera in 1995). But in 1934, he prepared a three-movement "symphony" based on instrumental interludes from the opera, and this piece, known as the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, quickly entered the standard orchestral repertoire. Among the first fully realized works of Hindemith's maturity, it is a locus classicus of his middle-period style, in which he purged himself of the acerbities of 20's neoclassicism and strove instead for a more lyrical approach. (Stravinsky's music underwent a similar transformation around the same time.)

The first movement of this symphony, "Angelic Concert," shows Hindemith at his best and most characteristic. A broadly expansive, chorale-like introduction in which he quotes the traditional German tune *Es Sungen Drei Engel* ("I saw three angels"), leads to a large-scale movement whose themes are developed contrapuntally over a vigorous, baroque-flavored rhythmic background. The square-cut melodies are memorable, the scoring clean and uncomplicated, and the harmonic language is at once unequivocally modern and unequivocally tonal.

In the course of writing the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, Hindemith had found himself, and under more favorable circumstances he might soon have become the dominant figure in Austro-German classical music. But his timing could not have been worse. At the very moment when he was purging his style of the excesses of 19th-century German romanticism, the country of his birth was being plunged into a political and spiritual crisis precipitated by a music-loving madman who idolized Richard Wagner.

In recent years, Hindemith's relationship with the Hitler regime has been a subject of close scholarly inquiry. Though he became a target of considerable official persecution—and without question loathed Hitler and all that Hitler stood for, including his virulent anti-Semitism—Hindemith's initial response to the Nazi takeover of Germany was a mixture of cynicism and indifference. Like many Germans (and countless other people around the world), he seems to have assumed at first that the Nazis were simply another political party, albeit one more thuggish than most, and his correspondence reveals that he was initially prepared to cooperate with them in return for being left alone.

As he wrote to his publishers in April 1933:

> One must just be patient for the next few weeks. So far in all the changes nothing has happened to me. Recently, just after my return from England, I had a long talk with some of the higher-ups in the *Kampfbund* [the Nazi party's "Combat League for German Culture"]. It concerned only educational matters, but I got the impression (after I had satisfied them that I was neither a half nor any other fractional Jew) that they have a good opinion of me there.

But Gertrud, Hindemith's wife, was half-Jewish, and in any case he was too famously outspoken to "curry favor" (as he put it) with a band of brutes. Moreover, his neo-



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classical style, though utterly German in character, was unpleasing to Hitler and his artistic *gauleiters*, who regarded the romanticism of Wagner, Bruckner, and Richard Strauss as the only acceptable models for music in the Third Reich. Though Hindemith tried on several occasions to come to terms with the Hitler regime, he eventually realized there was no place for him in the musical world of Nazi Germany.*

The libretto of *Mathis der Maler*, whose hero rejects politics for art, reflected Hindemith's growing alienation from the land of his birth. It also made the opera unperformable in Germany, though the *Mathis* Symphony, premiered by Wilhelm Furtwängler early in 1934, met with widespread acclaim. His situation came to a head when Furtwängler published a newspaper article, "The Hindemith Case," arguing that Hindemith was a major composer whose indifference to politics was irrelevant to his artistic significance:

> [T]here are very few real musicians in the world today, and we cannot afford to deprive ourselves of a man like Hindemith. . . . Hindemith has never been politically active: what is to become of us if political denunciation is to be applied in the fullest measure to matters of art?

This article was part of an ill-judged scheme, concocted by Hindemith himself, to persuade Hitler to approve the production of *Mathis* by the Berlin Staatsoper. The scheme backfired completely: Furtwängler was forced to recant in order to continue conducting, and German musicians subsequently stopped playing Hindemith's music. "Purely German his blood may be," Joseph Goebbels said of the composer, "but this only provides drastic confirmation of how deeply the Jewish intellectual infection has eaten into the body of our own people."

For the next few years, Hindemith kept a low profile, writing a theoretical treatise in which he systematized his thinking about the place of tonality in Western music. In this book, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, published in 1937, he sought to show that the triad-based system of tonal harmony arises from the acoustical properties of sound itself, and thus constitutes a "natural law" that cannot be violated without destroying the underlying basis of musical order. "Music, as long as it exists," he wrote, "will always take its departure from the major triad and return to it. The musician cannot escape it any more than the painter his primary colors or the architect his three dimensions."

IN 1938, Hindemith figured prominently in the infamous anti-modernist exhibition of *Entartete Musik* ("Degenerate Music") in Düsseldorf, a sign that he could no longer delay his departure from Germany. He and his wife emigrated to Switzerland, and two years later moved to the U.S. There he set up shop as a professor of music at Yale, attracting such pupils as Lukas Foss and Norman Dello Joio.

For all his love of teaching, Hindemith saw it mainly as an adjunct to his work as a composer, and once in the United States he produced a long series of works intended to exemplify the principles he had variously worked out in the writing of *Mathis der Maler* and *The Craft of Musical Composition*. These included sonatas for virtually every musical instrument (including tuba and double bass), a revised edition of *Das Marienleben* rewritten to accord more closely with his new thinking about tonality, and an impressive number of large-scale orchestral compositions.

Though Hindemith quickly established himself as a force in American music, some critics—especially those who, like the Francophile Virgil Thomson, sought to diminish German influence on American composers and performers—expressed skepticism about his work. Writing in 1941, Thomson described the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony in devastating terms:

> It is dogmatic and forceful and honest and completely without charm. . . . It has no warmth, no psychological understanding, no gentleness, no *gemütlichkeit*, and no sex appeal. . . . It is neither humane nor stylish, though it does have a kind of style, a style rather like that of some ponderously monumental and not wholly incommodious railway station.

Thomson's attack was a caricature. But, like all good caricatures, it contained certain elements of truth. Hindemith's post-*Mathis* music is inconsistent in quality, and at its not-infrequent worst it sounds like the work of a talented but pedestrian pupil who has painstakingly absorbed all of his master's well-known techniques but lacks the ability to do anything interesting with them. The melodies are dull, the polyphony overcrowded, the rhythms four-square to the point of banality. (Rhythm was always the weakest link in Hindemith's style.)

On the other hand, when he was visited by inspiration, he was capable of producing pieces of extreme beauty in which the now-familiar elements of his mature style were transfigured. Francis Poulenc, whom one would scarcely have expected to appreciate so wholly German a composer, wrote perceptively of this side of Hindemith:

> The form is not what I admire most in Hindemith—I find it often too academic. What I admire most is his lyricism, both heavy and lively, like quicksilver, in works such as his ballet *The Four Temperaments*.

* By 1939, he deeply regretted his early willingness to compromise with the Nazis. "I always see myself," he wrote in a private memorandum, "as the mouse who recklessly danced in front of the trap and even ventured inside; quite by chance, when it happened to be outside, the trap closed!"



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Indeed, *The Four Temperaments*, a ballet score for piano and strings commissioned in 1940 by George Balanchine and choreographed by him six years later, is a near-perfect example of the "good" Hindemith. A set of variations on a three-part theme, it is both formally ingenious and melodically fresh, completely free of the dryness found in many of his later works. Nor is it unique: one can easily point to a half-dozen post-1934 pieces that are equally inspired, and many others that come close.

Starting in the 50's, Hindemith wound down his teaching activities, resettling in Switzerland and launching a new career as a celebrity conductor. He produced one more large-scale opera, *Die Harmonie der Welt* (1957), a companion piece to *Mathis* in which he used the life of the astronomer Johannes Kepler to symbolize his own search for "harmony in all things of life and the world, and . . . the loneliness of him who finds it."

Though he knew his loyalty to tonality had become unfashionable, he had no doubt that the tide would turn some day, and he remained active to the very end of his life, conducting the premiere of his last composition, a hauntingly austere Mass for unaccompanied chorus, just weeks before his unexpected death in 1963.

In retrospect, Paul Hindemith's place in the Austro-German classical-music tradition is clear: he is its "road not taken."

With Hindemith's departure from the German musical scene in 1940, young composers either embraced the sterile conservatism of "official" music in the Third Reich or, following the war, chose a different dead end by joining one branch or another of the avant-garde. Not coincidentally, he was the only German classical composer of his time whose work appealed to an international audience—and he has had no successors.

For a time, it seemed as if Hindemith's generation of tonal modernists might also represent the end of the line for classical music itself. But as I have already indicated, and as can be seen in the Norton lectures he delivered at Harvard in 1949 and 1950, he took it for granted that such a fate was impossible. Written without assistance in a pungent English of his own devising, and published in book form as *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations* (1952), these remarkable lectures set forth Hindemith's own artistic credo mostly by implication—he was not given to making self-important pronouncements—but nonetheless with complete clarity.

In one of the book's most striking passages, he explains the essential defect of 12-tone music as follows:

> The ethical power of music is entirely neglected; the composer's obligations toward his fellow men are degraded to a game of double-crostics. . . . If music written on this basis has any message for others, it is the crassest order "you have to obey, you have to believe in my constructions," in a time when we are all so terribly in need of some shiny little reflection of that other message, the one that Schiller and Beethoven gave to mankind: *Seid umschlungen, Millionen*—be embraced, ye millions.

In this reference to the choral finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Hindemith leaves no doubt of his own commitment to the ethical power and potential of music—its unparalleled ability to reconcile man with man by offering a vision of superworldly order. Hence his unswerving philosophical opposition to nontonal methods of musical organization that instead deliberately embrace disorder and chaos, an opposition whose wisdom has now been definitively borne out by history.

Hindemith's mature music was at all times exemplary of his philosophy, though it did not always attain the expressive heights to which he aspired—a limitation that he humbly acknowledged and accepted. But in looking back on his life's work, it is far more noteworthy how often he did succeed in writing music worthy of his noble purpose. In the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, *The Four Temperaments*, and many other works of the 30's and after, we hear the Austro-German musical tradition as it could and should have been revitalized, had history taken a different turn. These are true masterpieces, composed by the last German master of music.



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# Hindemith on CD: A Select Discography

PAUL HINDEMITH recorded his own music as conductor, pianist, and solo violist, and as the violist of the Amar-Hindemith String Quartet. These recordings are out of print in the U.S., but fortunately his music has also attracted the attention of a large number of gifted interpreters, and many of their performances are available on CD. Here are eight of the best, arranged chronologically by date of composition:

**1920**: Perhaps the most successful example of the young Hindemith's attempt to fuse the emotional intensity of expressionism with the formal control of neoclassicism is his Third Quartet in C Major, performed to perfection by the peerlessly virtuosic Hollywood String Quartet (Testament SBT 1052).

**1923**: The witty, incisive *Kleine Kammermusik* for wind quintet, Op. 24, No. 2, is one of a series of ensemble pieces in which Hindemith moved away from romanticism to embrace the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of the 20's. It can be heard in a superior recording by the Ensemble Wien-Berlin, coupled with an equally effective performance by Wolfgang Schulz and Ferenc Bognár of the pensive Flute Sonata (1936) and three other works from his long series of two dozen instrumental sonatas (Sony Classical SK 64400).

**1934**: Among the many noted conductors who performed the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony was Eugene Ormandy, whose eloquent 1962 recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra refutes the canard that Hindemith's best music was dry or inexpressive. (Rafael Kubelik and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra recorded the complete opera in 1979, with the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau singing the title role, but it is currently out of print.) Ormandy's performance is now on a budget-priced CD, coupled with a spectacular 1964 recording by George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra of Hindemith's most enduringly popular composition, *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber* (1943), a boldly colored orchestral showpiece based on an unproduced ballet score (Sony Classical SBK 53258).

**1939**: The rarely played Violin Concerto, one of the most compelling large-scale works of Hindemith's middle years, can be heard in an outstanding performance by Isaac Stern, Leonard Bernstein, and the New York Philharmonic (Sony Classical SMK 64507).

**1939**: Hindemith's music is rarely thought of as having overt sensual appeal, but his Harp Sonata, as played by Mariko Anraku, makes sensitive use of that instrument's delicate, evanescent timbre (EMI Classics CDC 56515).

**1940**: Hindemith's "quicksilver" lyricism can be heard at its most engaging in *The Four Temperaments*. The best modern recording, featuring the English pianist Howard Shelley as soloist, is part of a series of Hindemith's complete works for orchestra currently being done by Yan Pascal Tortelier and the BBC Philharmonic (Chandos CHAN 9124). Also available is a videocassette of a New York City Ballet performance of the ballet, restaged by Balanchine in 1977 for PBS's *Dance in America* series (Nonesuch 40177-3).

**1951**: *Die Harmonie der Welt*, like *Mathis der Maler*, has not held the stage, but the three-movement symphony Hindemith wrote as a preparatory study for the complete opera continues to be performed occasionally, and it can be heard in a fine version by Tortelier and the BBC Philharmonic, coupled with the expansive *Symphonia Serena* of 1946 (Chandos CHAN 9217).

**1963**: Uwe Gronostay and the Danish National Radio Choir have recorded a breathtakingly lucid performance of the Mass for unaccompanied chorus (Chandos CHAN 9413).

CD's listed in the discography can be purchased online by viewing this article on COMMENTARY's website:
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# Books in Review

## Orientalism

Ivory Towers on Sand
by Martin Kramer
*Washington Institute. 137 pp. $19.95*

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

THIS IS a small monograph about large misjudgments. Martin Kramer, an American-trained Arabist who lives and teaches in Israel and has directed the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, presents a clear thesis. It is that the field of Middle Eastern studies in the United States (previously known as "Orientalism," a now strictly pejorative term), while growing by leaps and bounds since World War II, has been intellectually compromised by government and foundation funds, Arab endowments, voguish anti-Western and post-modernist theories, and the blight of political correctness. The result, in Kramer's view, is an academic industry that has lost the ability to think straight about the region of the world it is responsible for thinking about.

That Middle Eastern studies have been a growth industry is demonstrated by Kramer's figures. "In 1949," he writes,

> the Committee on Near [now Middle] Eastern Studies reported that "at no university [in the United States] does there appear to be a person who would claim to be an expert in the economics, sociology, or politics of the present-day Near East." Twenty years later, in 1969, there were an estimated 340 full-time faculty members in Middle Eastern studies; in 1977, there were 530. . . . In 1951, there were five Middle East programs at universities; in 1956, twelve; in 1962, eighteen; in 1970, 36.

By 1976, these new programs had produced "4,300 bachelor's degrees, 1,500 master's degrees, and 800 doctorates."

The reason for this boom, of course, was the greatly heightened importance of the Middle East in the geostrategic thinking of these years. Prior to World War II, the Arab world had been peripheral to America's consciousness and American interests; starting with the 1950's, all this was changed by American dependence on Arab oil and American-Soviet competition for spheres of influence. Suddenly the U.S. government needed extensive information about, and analysis of, Arab societies and their political elites. It was natural to turn for this to the universities—which, since they lacked the scholars to provide it, had to be jump-started with government money, largely allotted under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act. Foundations like Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford chipped in handsomely as well.

Even money without strings, however, can tie its recipients to its donors. The consequence, as Kramer relates, was that the flourishing Middle Eastern departments developed by universities like Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Michigan, UCLA, and Berkeley produced scholars whose view of the Arab world was, by and large, highly con-

HILLEL HALKIN *reviewed Yossi Klein Halevi's* At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden *in our November 2001 issue.*



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genial to the State Department. That view was based on what Kramer calls "the paradigm of development"—that is, the assumption that the countries of the Middle East, every one of which except Israel was living in a state of economic backwardness, political autocracy, and widespread Islamic militancy, were about to follow the same route to liberalization and modernization once taken by the West.

This was a convenient scenario because it justified a foreign policy that already existed—namely, providing these countries with an American military shield without pressuring them to democratize or institute economic or religious reforms. After all, if democracy, Western-style capitalism, and secularization were the inevitable future in any case, why step on anyone's toes by trying to hasten them?

Yet the paradigm of development was a colossal failure. No matter what ostensible course Arab regimes in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's sought to follow—a "revolutionary" one like Nasserist Egypt or Ba'athist Iraq, a traditional Islamic one like Saudi Arabia, or a laissez-faire one like Lebanon—what emerged were brutal dictatorships, stagnant economies, continued religious and intellectual regimentation, and bloody civil wars. Not a single Arab country came any closer in these years to resembling the West. Many moved in the opposite direction.

IT WAS time for the academic paradigm to shift. Yet when it did, the turn was not toward a more realistic appraisal of the Arab world but, if anything, toward an even more ideologically distorted one. And the new ideology's prophet was not even a member of the guild. Rather, he was a Palestinian literary critic just then coming into fame, Columbia University's Edward Said, whose *Orientalism* (1978), a crass and politically motivated attack on the entire tradition of Arabic studies in the West, quickly became, as Kramer describes it, the Bible of Middle Eastern studies.

*Orientalism* argued that, from its inception in the 19th century, Western scholarship in the field of Arabic and Islamic culture was corrupted by racism and a colonialist agenda. It was indeed a pernicious book. (I read it at the time of its publication and remember feeling outraged, as the son of a scholar of medieval Arabic and Judeo-Arabic texts, by its dishonest attack on a profession I knew to be conscientious to a fault.) In the words—quoted by Kramer—of the British historian Clive Dewey, "historian after historian must have put [Said's book] down without finishing it—without imagining, for a moment, the influence it would exert. . . . Yet it clearly touched a deep vein of vulgar prejudice running through American academe."

The outlook promulgated by *Orientalism*, which no doubt would also have spread without it, touched a deep vein of self-interest as well. If, young Middle Eastern scholars could conclude, the "paradigm of development" had been wrong, this was not simply because it had been wishful thinking, much less because Arab societies were constitutionally incapable of modernizing. Rather, it was because the idea of modernization itself was a construction of Western capitalism, and one that these societies were wise to resist. Moreover, in such forms as Islamic egalitarianism and popular Palestinian resistance to Israel, democracy *already* existed, or at any rate would develop spontaneously from local traditions and ways of doing things.

Not only was this a flattering thought for Arabs themselves, whose oil money by now had become a significant part of the budgets of departments of Middle Eastern studies, it also spared American experts on the Arab world the need to offend anyone in it with their criticism. Indeed, writes Kramer, by the end of the 1990's,

> while political Islam may have failed in the Middle East, it [had become] a spectacular success in American academe. The high profile it conferred upon certain scholars produced tenure, grants, book contracts, and even directorships of centers [of Middle Eastern studies]. . . . It will take years for Middle Eastern studies to restore its reputation for credibility and relevance.

ALL THIS was bad enough in a pre-September 11 world in which an American foreign policy influenced by academic theories was guided by the assumption that, from Iraq to Sudan and from Lebanon to Saudi Arabia, things were not all that bad and getting better. It is far more serious in a world after the attack on the World Trade Center. Once the first, Afghan stage is over, a cogent response to that attack will depend on the ability to assess accurately the workings of Arab societies and governments that—passively or actively—shelter and support terrorist organizations. Without the ability to think coherently about such societies, coherent action is hardly possible.

If Martin Kramer is right, such an ability is now at a lower ebb than it was when the boom in Middle Eastern studies began 50 years ago. For those of us who do not have his insider's view of the academic world, it is difficult to judge some of his pronouncements. But it is enough to listen to the reactions to September 11 on the part of the great majority of our politicians, pundits, and intellectuals, with their pious litany that "Islam is not to blame" and their repeated warnings against antagonizing the Arab world in the war against terror, to realize that Kramer cannot be far wrong. Although State Department officials and newspaper columnists may not derive their ideas directly from the universities, much of their thinking is ultimately passed down from the world of scholarship. And if Islam and the Arabs *are* to blame—not all



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of Islam and all Arabs, certainly, but something deep-rooted in both—the last ones to catch on are likely to be our academic specialists in the study of the Middle East.

## Demerit Badge

On My Honor:
Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth
by Jay Mechling
*Chicago. 360 pp. $30.00*

Reviewed by
Kay S. Hymowitz

In 1953, at the age of eight, a Miami boy named Jay Mechling joined the Cub Scouts. Having climbed through the ranks and reached the pinnacle of Eagle Scout, and having become still later a "folklorist of children's cultures" and an assistant professor of American Studies at the University of California at Davis, he decided to make the Scouts the subject of his scholarly work. Then came the 1999 rampage by two teenage boys at Columbine High School in Colorado, a series of popular books on America's "boy problem," and a hugely controversial Supreme Court decision allowing the Boy Scouts to ban gays; the professor realized he might have a role to play as a public intellectual.

The resulting book, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth*, steeped in the language of gender theory, frame analysis, feminist psychoanalysis, and cybernetic systems, makes one thankful that so few academics venture outside their cubicles and their conferences to speak to ordinary Americans. Still, *On My Honor*, for which a better subtitle would be "The Semiotics of 'Gopher Guts' and the Homoerotic Discourse of the Outdoor Latrine," does have its moments. And despite its all too predictable theorizing, despite even its own intentions, Mechling's detailed portrait of one Boy Scout camp also proves just how truly invaluable this national institution is.

Most of *On My Honor* takes the form of a composite diary from a two-week stay at the summer camp of Troop 49—not its real name—in the Sierra Nevadas. The troop, divided into four patrols of younger boys and a group of "seniors" (age fourteen to seventeen), follows an elaborate calendar of traditional activities. With Mechling, we go to Church Rock, which commands a stunning view of the Sierra peaks, where religious services are held

Kay S. Hymowitz *is a contributing editor of* City Journal *and the author of* Ready or Not: What Happens When We Treat Children as Small Adults.

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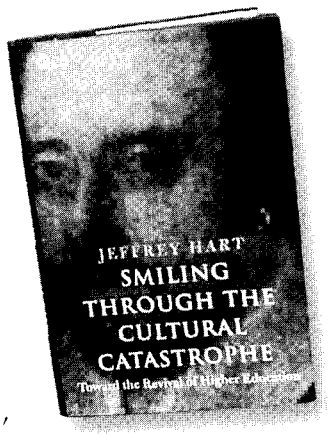


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each Sunday. We watch the flag-folding ceremonies, the greased-watermelon contests, and instruction in the proper tying of neckerchiefs. We learn the troop's yells, campfire songs, and oaths.

In analyzing the meaning of these activities, Mechling reaches for a variety of inane academic theories that lead him to conclusions like: "The six-pack of cans of Coke that is the treasure in the Treasure Hunt can be read as a copro-symbol of feces." But he also manages to evoke the campers' strong attachment to custom and tradition. Their rich routines and rituals provide a highly pleasurable arena in which boys who are "used to having their mothers do everything for them"—the words are those of their scoutmaster—learn personal responsibility. The younger boys master the art of cooking for themselves. Each thirteen-year-old patrol leader has to manage the eight boys in his group, ensuring that meals are made, clean-up duties are completed, and homesick campers are comforted. As for the seniors, they conduct most of the classes, including compass and map reading; organize major events like treasure hunts and hikes; and run the nightly campfire, choosing which of over 100 songs will set an appropriate tone for the evening.

At the head of the camp is the scoutmaster, Pete, who deserves a place among the ranks of legendary teachers like Joe Clark and Jaime Escalante. An adult with a natural gift for the moral education of young people, Pete demands that seniors take their work seriously, reminding them that "these classes are your duty." He shows his younger charges how to reconcile after a fight, and how to tease back instead of sulking when they have been made the objects of ridicule. At a rope-slide contest, he pulls aside the young patrol leader to explain how to encourage a fearful boy without humiliating him. And he vigorously challenges lying and evasiveness; his "Four Decodable Coverts," a guide to the ways young people pretend to be agreeing with you when they clearly are not, is a masterpiece of amateur psychologizing.

Still, camp is far from a church social. Though he accepts no cruel or especially foul language, Pete tolerates the raunchy gross-out humor, including farting contests and masturbation jokes, beloved by children and male adolescents. He even experiments with permitting his seniors the modest use of alcohol during a night out and dirty magazines at their campsite, though he also rescinds these privileges immediately and without apology when the boys abuse them. In less important matters, Pete believes strongly in giving second chances; for outside camp, as he astutely observes, "[t]een culture pretty much labels you, and you're stuck with that status all through junior-high and high school."

INTERSPERSED THROUGHOUT his narrative, and in a series of "excursuses," Mechling tackles the three major controversies—"God, gays, and girls"—that have bedeviled the Scouts over the last decade. The first began in the mid-1980's when several families challenged the organization for expelling members who refused to repeat the Scouts' oath of "duty toward God." By digging in its heels on this issue, Mechling contends, the National Council of Boy Scouts abandoned the intent of the organization's founders, several of whom entertained unconventional religious attitudes and showed "little interest in promoting religion beyond a very generalized belief in a Supreme Being." Besides, he adds, "duty toward God" only made its appearance in the 1950's, during a period when religiosity was viewed in the country at large as evidence of anti-Communism and the phrase "under God" came to be inserted in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The 1990's brought perhaps the greatest challenge in the organization's history as, in several ultimately unsuccessful cases, girls sued to join the Boy Scouts. (Fearful of more court challenges in an already full docket, the Scouts have recently decided to allow female volunteer leaders.) But more notorious than these have been the lawsuits that followed a decision to terminate the membership of a number of openly gay scouts. One of these cases finally made its way to the Supreme Court; in June 2000, the Justices ruled for the Scouts, accepting the argument that they are a private group with a protected right to association rather than a public accommodation required to adhere to anti-discrimination laws. Yet this has not settled matters; since the Court's decision, government agencies, usually at the prodding of civil-rights groups, have rescinded special privileges for the Scouts like the subsidized use of parks, and legislation has even been introduced in Congress to revoke the organization's federal charter.

Mechling's major objection to the ban on gays is less legal than, well, academic, and in expounding it he gives us a good picture of some of the major premises of contemporary gender theory. Yes, he admits, there are biological differences between the sexes, but primary attraction to the opposite sex is not one of them. Harking back to Freud's theory of infantile "polymorphous perversity," he asserts that humans are naturally bisexual, and only in early childhood does the patriarchal family take upon itself "the creation of the heterosexual male."

It is in order to advance this "fragile construction," Mechling speculates, and "to repress the feminine," that the Boy Scouts have followed the rest of society in teaching boys the ways of misogyny and homophobia. Allowing homosexuals in the Boy Scouts, he argues, would not only have the salutary benefit of discouraging these evils, it would broaden America's "stereotypical



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performance of masculinity" beyond its narrow, patriarchal boundaries.

Academic theorists often invite skepticism, but it is rare to find a sitting duck on the order of the author of *On My Honor*. For in his actual description of Troop 49, Mechling supplies us with everything we need not only to disprove his own analysis but to demolish many of the premises on which he relies to demonstrate it.

Take his notions about the "construction of heterosexual masculinity." By his own testimony, Troop 49 is nothing if not nurturing and sensitive, consciously discouraging the very quality of "coolness" that epitomizes what Mechling calls "masculine autonomy, rationality, and control." We see a senior tenderly cleaning the blister of his fellow. Pete, who admits to crying easily, weeps along with a long-time camper who is thinking of leaving the troop. The scoutmaster tells about how he learned to cook in the Boy Scouts and now does all the cooking for his family. The boys of Troop 49 are forbidden to call each other "fag." And so forth.

Mechling tries to wriggle out of the implications of these examples of "androgynous masculinity," so numerous even he cannot miss them, by insisting that "Troop 49 is nothing like what the defenders of the national movement imagine a Scout troop to be." But he would have to say that; for, in his rendition, the men who run the official organization and their sympathizers are the Authoritarian Personality personified. These are individuals who see "atheists and the ACLU . . . as agents of an assault upon masculinity and whiteness." They are filled with "anxiety"—about masturbation, about "the adolescent male body," and of course, about their own masculinity.

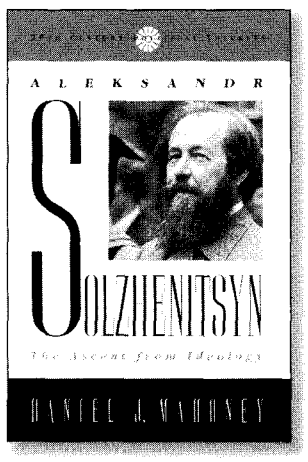
Unfortunately for Mechling's feverish fantasy of patriarchal masculinity, signs of it are not only absent, by his own telling, from Troop 49 but are nowhere to be detected in the organization's official literature. (As for "whiteness," Mechling of course never mentions the Scout's strenuous, and successful, efforts to recruit minority, inner-city boys.) True, the Scouts have said they find homosexuality "immoral," but far from the "purge" Mechling thinks this implies, the movement asserts, plausibly enough, that it "makes no effort to discover the sexual orientation of any person."

In fact, the Scouts strive to avoid the subject of sex altogether. The reason for this is not "anxiety" (except, perhaps, anxiety about lawsuits). It is, rather, that sex severely complicates the task of socializing


# Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

## The Ascent from Ideology

*By Daniel J. Mahoney*

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**Daniel J. Mahoney** is associate professor of political science at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1999 he was awarded the prestigious Prix Aron.

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children. A memorable moment in this book occurs when the ever-sensible Pete refuses an invitation for a joint campfire with a Girl Scout troop just across the lake. The trouble, he says, is that when they are around girls, boys "show off, get silly, get really out of control." The soundness of his insight is demonstrated later that night when three boys are caught attempting to swim across the lake.

What Mechling and his ilk finally cannot admit is that it is not "the patriarchy," and certainly not the Scouts, that teach homophobia and hypermasculinity to youngsters. To the contrary, those most likely to engage in hazing, taunts, and cruelty are undersocialized adolescents who are out of earshot of adults like Pete. No Boy Scout who has truly learned the lessons of the *Handbook*—to be "friendly, courteous, kind, cheerful, and brave," and to do one's duty to others—would dare to act like that.

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## Vietnam Syndrome

War in a Time of Peace:
Bush, Clinton,
and the Generals
by David Halberstam
*Scribner. 543 pp. $28.00*

Reviewed by
Jacob Heilbrunn

DAVID HALBERSTAM'S *War in a Time of Peace* is one of the first attempts to define what was noteworthy about American foreign policy in the Clinton era. Focusing on key figures in the White House, State Department, and Pentagon—Halberstam interviewed, among others, Colin Powell, Al Gore, Madeleine Albright, Richard Holbrooke, and Anthony Lake—the book explores the bitter fights that took place during the 1990's over the question of American military intervention overseas, particularly in the Balkans.

Foreign policy is familiar territory for Halberstam. Though his most recent books have covered everything from major-league baseball to the impact of communications technology on politics, he cut his journalistic teeth in Vietnam, where his pessimistic dispatches earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1964 at the age of thirty. Halberstam began as a hawk in that war but went on to write the bestseller *The Best and the Brightest*, which portrayed Robert McNamara, Dean Rusk, and other Johnson-administration officials as the real aggressors in Vietnam, men consumed by an arrogance of power. The book provided no fundamentally new insights, but by depicting the Vietcong insurgency as a legitimate nationalist revolt, impervious to American might, it codified the belief on the Left that it was futile for the U.S. to wield its military power abroad.

Halberstam has now come full circle, confessing himself to have been "quite wrong" on a number of key politico-military questions (but not about his opposition to U.S. intervention in Vietnam). Indeed, as he sees it, the foreign-policy problems of the Clinton years are best explained by the tenacity with which many members of the administration and the leadership of the U.S. military clung to a false set of lessons from that war.

HALBERSTAM SETS the stage by examining the final year of the first Bush administration. As he stresses, there was a chasm between the foreign-policy outlook of Bush and that of his hard-line predecessor Ronald Reagan, exemplified by James Baker's early purge of Reagan appointees at the State Department. As Baker reportedly said at the time, "Remember, this is *not* a friendly takeover."

Though Halberstam himself makes a few ritualistically liberal noises about the foreign-policy primitivism of the Reaganites, his main concern is to criticize Bush-administration officials for being too cautious. For Bush and his advisers, Halberstam complains, the prospect of the Soviet Union's crackup was a nightmare, and this fear determined American policy elsewhere, especially in Yugoslavia. In their eyes, backing the breakaway province of Bosnia would have set a dangerous precedent. The result was that the U.S. stood aloof at a moment when its influence might have prevented war in the region.

As Halberstam notes, Bill Clinton seized upon the Balkans imbroglio during the 1992 presidential campaign to attack Bush and to neutralize charges of his own foreign-policy inexperience. Once in office, however, Clinton quickly adopted the stance of his predecessor. If anything, Clinton, who had promised to focus on the economy like a laser, was even less disposed to intervene in the widening conflict.

The signs of this hands-off attitude were visible from the outset of the administration. Clinton quickly dumped the foreign-policy hawks who had helped with his campaign and went with the more emollient types. Warren Christopher was selected to be Secretary of State precisely because he was not the sort of forceful figure who would push Clinton to act. As for the national security adviser, Anthony Lake, though he had been responsible for Clinton's bellicose campaign rhetoric about Bosnia, he soon stifled his own views, becoming for Halberstam a Hamlet-like figure, tormented by the killings in the Balkans yet obsessed by the fear that any American military action would recapitulate the quagmire he had seen first-hand in Vietnam as a young foreign-service officer.

AS HALBERSTAM shows, Clinton's mistrust of foreign involvements

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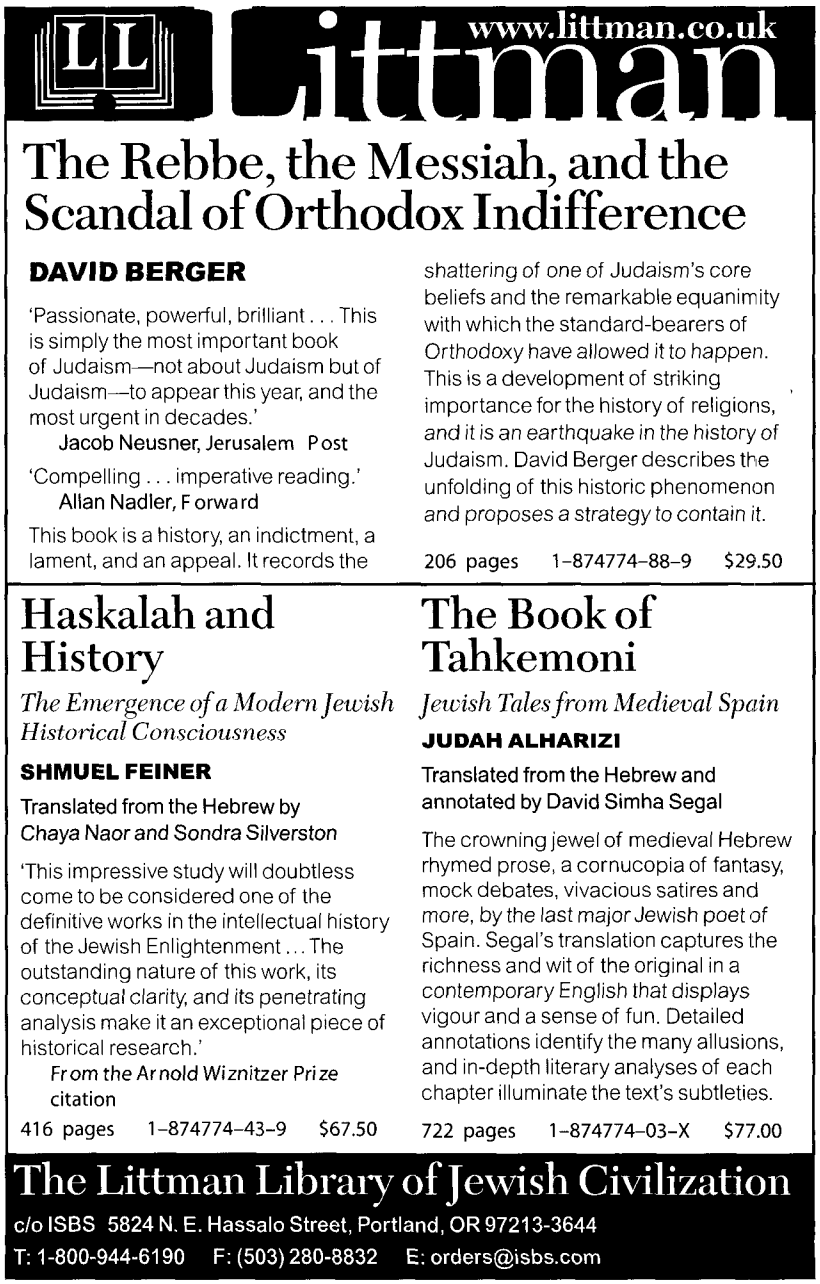
was cemented by the difficulties that he inherited from Bush in Somalia. In the summer of 1993, eighteen Americans were killed and 74 were wounded in Mogadishu trying to capture the gang lord Farah Aideed. Clinton's main concern was to get out of this crisis with as little political damage as possible. The Somalia tragedy, Halberstam writes, "helped confirm Clinton's worst suspicions about foreign policy. It was a tricky, murky business, outside the reach of domestic presidential control, with a greater possibility for negatives than positives."

As for Bosnia, after years in which his administration had attempted to deny that genocide was taking place there, Clinton found his hand forced by the Serbs' massacre of Muslims at Srebrenica in July 1995. An administration that had conducted a photo-op foreign policy could no longer disguise reality. American bombing finally began and, in combination with the advances of the Croatian military, induced the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic to enter negotiations.

Yet, Halberstam shows, even after a peace agreement was signed at Dayton, the Clinton administration remained obsessed with appearances, putting a twelve-month time limit on the commitment of U.S. troops to Bosnia. "It was a completely unrealistic deadline that had nothing to do with the problems that any peacekeeping force was likely to encounter on the ground," Halberstam writes. "But it would cover the period of the 1996 election."

Not until Clinton's second term did he assemble a foreign-policy team more to Halberstam's liking. With Madeleine Albright at the State Department, Samuel Berger as national security adviser, and General John Shalikashvili as head of the Joint Chiefs, the administration started to take a somewhat tougher line. As Halberstam points out, Shalikashvili played a key role in moving the army away from the doctrine, first articulated by Reagan Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and later seconded in a modified form by Colin Powell when he served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, that military intervention was appropriate only if vital American interests were at stake. Rejecting this Vietnam-inspired view, Shalikashvili demanded more flexibility in the use of force.

Shalikashvili also saw to it that General Wesley Clark, one of the heroes of Halberstam's tale, received a fourth star and became the supreme commander of NATO forces in Europe. It was thus a setback for this more militant new tendency when, even as Clark successfully pushed for bombing the Serbs in Kosovo during the next stage of the Balkan wars, the administration failed to develop a coherent plan, revealing early on that it did not intend to send American ground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troops. Fortunately, Serbia's Milosevic capitulated before such deployments became an issue. In the event, the important thing for Clinton was that he was able to claim victory.

DAVID HALBERSTAM is a dogged reporter and has managed to accumulate many new details about the conduct of foreign policy during the Clinton years. Most interestingly, he shows how a number of liberals in the administration came to adopt more hawkish views even as the military and the President remained bedeviled by memories of Vietnam.

But the narrative of *War in a Time of Peace* ends rather inconclusively, and Halberstam offers no real verdict about the administration's legacy. The problem may be that he focuses so narrowly on military conflicts that he loses sight of the fact that the administration did have a coherent foreign policy. What Clinton believed in above all—and what Halberstam misses entirely—is the idea of globalization as the great peacemaker.

Clinton thought that if the U.S. could fashion a new global community that would bind nations into a complex web of economic interests and political organizations, cooperation, not confrontation, would prevail. Whether it was China or the Middle East, Clinton and his advisers were convinced that the world had entered a fundamentally new era, one in which history and power politics no longer mattered as much as they had in the past. It was no accident that by the end of his second term, Clinton's most trusted foreign-policy adviser was the trade lawyer, Samuel Berger. From the President's point of view, the wars he was forced to embark upon were pesky distractions from more pressing matters.

Today, the Clinton era seems most notable not for what was accomplished but for the illusions it spawned, globalization foremost among them. As the Bush administration now finds itself locked in a world-wide war, the record of its predecessor—Halberstam's approval of its late and half-hearted conversion to hawkishness notwithstanding—provides a lesson in how not to act.

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## Freudian Slippage

Out of Its Mind:
Psychiatry in Crisis
by J. Allan Hobson and
Jonathan Leonard
*Perseus. 288 pp. $26.00*

Reviewed by
Kevin Shapiro

IN 1895, Sigmund Freud, then thirty-nine and known primarily for his work in neuropathology and clinical neurology, set out to "furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science"—in other words, to build a brain-based psychology on the same epistemological footing as biology, chemistry, and physics. Within a few years, however, having decided that too little was known about the brain, he shelved his project as impractical. By the time he published *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899, Freud had distanced himself from neuroscience, preferring to concentrate on psychological theories that could be expressed in abstract terms. Thus was psychoanalysis born.

Freud's modern sympathizers maintain that he always knew, and even hoped, that advances in neuroscience would someday render his psychological speculations obsolete. Whether or not they are correct about this, the idea of brain-based psychology was slow to catch on among psychoanalysts, the inheritors of Freud's legacy. After all, prior to the advent of psychoanalysis, psychiatric medicine meant little more than ministering to the legions of mentally ill who were warehoused in asylums; the Freudian paradigm restored hope—and glamor—to the discipline. The cost, however, was that psychiatry lost touch with its empirical foundation, and hence with the rest of biologically-based medicine. As J. Allan Hobson and Jonathan Leonard argue in *Out of Its Mind*, the eventual result was the decline of psychiatric medicine and a long period of confusion about how mental illnesses should be treated.

In the 1950's, Hobson and Leonard show, doubts began to grow about the efficacy of psychoanalysis. At a moment when relatively few could afford it, psychoanalysis was both time-intensive—requiring as many as five sessions a week—and incredibly expensive. In the meantime, empirical evaluations were suggesting that the "talking cure" yielded nothing, whereas psychoactive medications could result in fantastic progress. Rival approaches mushroomed, some of which, like "therapeutic touching" and the invocation of "natural forces," bordered on the occult.

Under the combined weight of these trends, psychoanalysis finally collapsed in the early 1970's. But there was no theoretical paradigm to take its place. Psychiatrists were thus left, in Hobson and Leonard's telling, with the remnants of Freudian psychology and an ever-expanding arsenal of psychoactive drugs, many of which had uncertain modes of action and unknown side effects. Meanwhile, social pressure had shut the doors of mental hospitals, whose patients were being decanted into communities that lacked the services and facilities to deal with them. Many of the mentally ill, either released from institutions or kept from entering them in the first place, ended up homeless or imprisoned. This situation persists today.

Not surprisingly, Hobson and Leonard regard our current system as in urgent need of repair. Their

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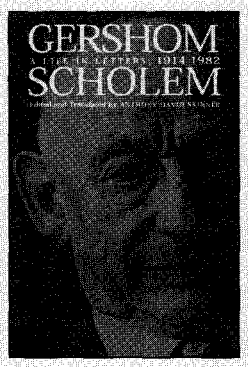
own approach picks up where Freud left off: the time is ripe, as they see it, to reunite psychiatry with "brain science," which in the past several decades has reaped an extraordinary harvest of knowledge about the mind and its disorders.

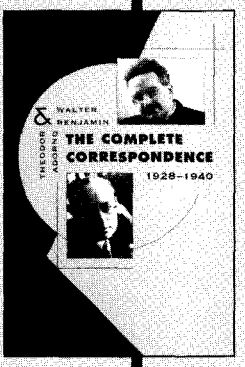
Toward this end, about a third of *Out of Its Mind* is given over to a lucid and informative summary of what is known about the neurobiological basis of normal and pathological consciousness. This discussion is flavored strongly by Hobson's own comprehensive theory of conscious states, built over the course of decades of research into the neurochemistry of sleep and dreaming. The intent throughout is to demonstrate that brain science can be used in productive ways to understand and treat psychiatric illnesses.

*Out of Its Mind* concludes with what Hobson and Leonard style a "call to arms," essentially laying out the framework for a new psychiatry. They call their approach "neurodynamic," emphasizing both its grounding in neuroscience and its emphasis on strong therapeutic relationships between psychiatrists and patients. This latter aspect is crucial, they hold, not least as a corrective to the prevailing and dangerously inaccurate view of drugs as a psychiatric cure-all. The book ends with concrete proposals that range from changes in the content of undergraduate and medical education to a national network of mental-health centers with affiliated community services.

A PREREQUISITE for turning over American psychiatry, one would think, is drawing a picture of it as it actually is. In this, Hobson and Leonard unfortunately fall short. The story they concentrate on telling is mostly that of large, state-backed psychiatric hospitals like the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, a Harvard-affiliated facility where Hobson works. Undoubtedly these institutions have suffered a decline in prestige and funding over the past few decades, and despite some innovative strategies—like introducing psychiatric care to homeless shelters—they generally lack for patients and equipment. It is also true that psychiatrists in health-maintenance organizations (HMO's) have been trapped in dungeons of prescription-writing, with fewer opportunities for meaningful patient contact than even the asylum wardens of decades past.

There are brighter spots, however, that Hobson and Leonard say little about. Just a few miles from Hobson's citadel of benign neglect is McLean Hospital, a psychiatric institution that has fared much better in an era of biomedicine and managed care. McLean, not Mass Mental, is now Harvard's primary psychiatric teaching facility, with various residential and outpatient treatment

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programs as well as state-of-the-art research in neuroscience laboratories. True, McLean is a private hospital, and historically a rather exclusive one at that. All the same, its success as an already existing model of the neurodynamic approach belies the rather dismal picture of psychiatry painted in *Out of Its Mind*.

Nor is McLean an isolated example. Much of the research discussed in this book was conducted by physician-scientists at similar institutions who have long embraced a brain-based approach to psychiatry. Hobson and Leonard do not say much about this, although they do mention with approval a rather obscure journal called *Neuro-Psychoanalysis*, intended, as its title implies, to bridge the gap between analysts and neuroscientists. But there are also more widely read journals, like *Biological Psychiatry*, *Cognitive Neuropsychiatry*, and the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, that already embody the scientific side of what Hobson and Leonard call "neurodynamics."

STILL, IF Hobson and Leonard's call for a brain-based psychiatry is not particularly revolutionary, they do make a few trailblazing moves. Most important is their recognition that clinical psychology—the "talking cure" side of psychiatry—needs to be revamped so that drug treatment can be satisfactorily integrated with it. Not only would this free psychiatrists from at least some of their HMO-related travails, it would go a long way toward ending the expensive and ineffective revolving-door treatment of the mentally ill.

Hobson and Leonard distill the neurodynamic approach into a couple of clearly enunciated core principles: that drugs and therapy are mutually reinforcing, and that many mental ills should be viewed as chronic diseases, generally amenable to treatment.* But they do not stop there, instead venturing into the realm of public policy. There, real problems arise.

For example, the authors lament the "barbaric" laws that in most states bar the involuntary commitment of the mentally ill, attributing this to the public distrust of psychiatry and the misguided fears of "civil libertarians." Sweeping aside these concerns, they hail the recent trend toward increased outpatient commitment as a way of ensuring that psychiatric care reaches those who truly need it.

No doubt laws against commitment often hinder efforts to treat seriously ill people who lack insight into their own condition, and it may be time for legislatures to revisit those laws in light of the difficulties they have caused. At the same time, however, the ethical and political ramifications of involuntary commitment are much thornier than Hobson and Leonard seem willing to admit. One need not invoke the example of the Soviet Union (or of contemporary Cuba), where opposition to the regime was deemed a medical pathology and political dissidents were locked up in psychiatric hospitals, to envision instances in the United States where the line between sound psychiatry and social engineering might easily become blurred. Could "racism" be identified as a disease, for example? Or "homophobia," as homosexuality was until recently? To believe that sound science will guard against abuses is a utopian delusion; sound science has not prevented the zealous overprescription of psychotropic drugs like Ritalin and Prozac.

Similar caveats apply to Hobson and Leonard's recommendation for expanding mental-health services within the prison system. Some mentally ill people are indeed in prison because there is nowhere else for them to go. As Hobson and Leonard note, this situation is far

* For a fuller discussion of developments in this area, see "Romancing Depression" by Paul R. McHugh in the December 2001 COMMENTARY.

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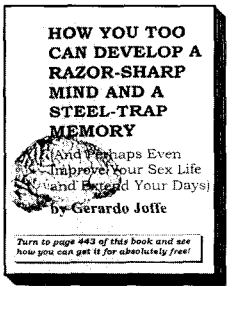
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from ideal either for the inmates, who do not receive proper care and are often mistreated, or for the criminal-justice system, which is not generally equipped to deal with psychiatric cases. Their solution is to set up a parallel system of penitentiary "psychiatric wings" for the mentally ill, in effect "bring[ing] the mental hospital to the prison."

Leaving aside the cost of such reforms (Hobson and Leonard think they would ultimately be cost-effective), we are again faced with practical questions about how to separate "the mad" from "the bad." The authors acknowledge that care must be exercised, but they sidestep a legal and scientific minefield. Researchers are already using brain-imaging techniques in an effort to discern what is different about the brains of psychopaths. Whatever they uncover will no doubt be pressed into serving one side or the other of a debate over how to view psychopathy: as a disease amenable to treatment, or as a marker of incorrigible criminality.

These serious reservations noted, *Out of its Mind* remains an important and timely book. Hobson and Leonard are surely right about the need to rehabilitate psychiatry, especially public psychiatry, by putting it on a sound empirical footing; until this happens, the social costs of mental illness are only likely to worsen, and more and more people with mental disorders will suffer poor and sporadic treatment. Despite their incautious proposals for institutional reform, moreover, there can be no doubt that such reform is needed. Even if "neurodynamics" merely gives a name to a movement that has been in the making for several decades, it may still serve as a rallying-cry for a new approach to mental health—which would be all to the good.

## Tale from the Crypt

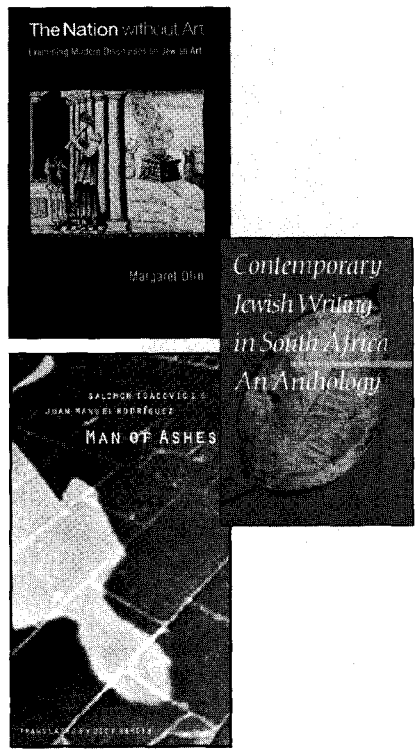
Reaching for Glory:
Lyndon Johnson's Secret
White House Tapes, 1964-65
edited by Michael Beschloss

*Simon & Schuster. 480 pp. $30.00*

Reviewed by
Mark Falcoff

Like Dracula, Lyndon Johnson refuses to die. Here he is again, returning from more than 25 years in the grave to impress, fascinate, and horrify us at the same time. This miracle comes to us courtesy of the Johnson family and the administrators of the Johnson archive in Austin, Texas, who decided to release secret tapes of LBJ's

Mark Falcoff *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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White House conversations. This was done in explicit contravention of the late President's wish that these tapes be sealed for 50 years after his death, and then possibly destroyed afterward. No reader of this book will wonder why.

In an earlier, 1997 volume titled *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-64*, the presidential historian Michael Beschloss assembled and annotated transcripts of Johnson's covertly recorded conversations from the time of the assassination of President Kennedy in late November 1963 to the eve of the 1964 presidential election. Here he carries the story forward to the late summer of 1965. The two dates bracket a crucial transformation in the Johnson presidency.

At the beginning of this installment Johnson is on the cusp of the most resounding electoral victory in modern American history; in its final pages he realizes that his presidency is doomed to failure and ignominy, thanks largely to the Vietnam war. Perhaps a better title might have been *From Sweet to Bitter*. Or *From Euphoria to Self-Pity*.

The eighteen months covered in this book were chock full of dramatic and important events. Apart from the gradual escalation of our involvement in Vietnam, they saw the presidential election of 1964, the civil-rights revolution in the South, and LBJ's attempt to construct an elaborate welfare state that would have been much larger, more costly, and potentially more wasteful than the "Great Society" he succeeded in saddling us with in the end.

The book also contains a series of fascinating, often highly revealing cameo appearances by the leading political personalities of the period—J. Edgar Hoover, Hubert Humphrey, Senator Richard Russell, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Justice (later UN Ambassador) Arthur Goldberg, Bill Moyers, Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Robert Kennedy, and Billy Graham, among others. There are several conversations with Jacqueline Kennedy, some of which actually predate the period of this volume but have been included by way of a prologue. And Beschloss has also included entries from the tape-recorded diary of Lady Bird Johnson. They establish that she was far more intellectually focused and emotionally stable than her husband.

LYNDON JOHNSON came to the presidency better equipped in many

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ways than any number of his predecessors (and successors). As a former majority leader of the Senate, he was not only a virtuoso of the legislative process but a tireless collector of influential friends across the political spectrum and a player skilled enough even to use former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower as pawns. He knew how to manipulate, cajole, and persuade—often on the telephone, without even the benefit of face-to-face contact. He had a clear vision of what he wanted to accomplish, and was almost literally inexhaustible. His dynamism, his tactical brilliance, even a crude kind of wit all bounce off the pages of this volume.

He was, however, a deeply insecure man who nursed all kinds of hidden hurts and suspicions, some of which were justified but many of which were frankly outlandish. When his longtime aide Walter Jenkins was arrested in the fall of 1964 for obscene conduct in the men's room of the downtown YMCA, Johnson was convinced, the tapes show, that his aide had been set up by a "plant" from the presidential campaign of his Republican opponent Barry Goldwater. (Not so.) After trouncing Goldwater by winning an unprecedented 61 percent of the popular vote several weeks later, Johnson is seen brooding that Bobby Kennedy and the people around him "put out this stuff that nobody loves Johnson. . . . That I was just the lesser of two evils." "We've got to have some love and affection in our own right!" he thunders. Indeed, his obsession with the Kennedy family, the "Georgetown crowd," and the sophisticates of New York and Washington reaches almost pathological proportions, covering every silver cloud with a dark lining.

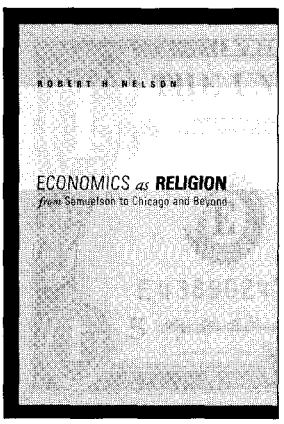
Johnson was also a brutal and cynical political operator, not squeamish about using underhanded, even illegal tactics to advance his purposes.* To counteract the widespread notion that the Kennedy clan regarded him as a usurper, he allowed reporters to eavesdrop covertly on his private conversations with Jacqueline Kennedy. He ordered his campaign workers to leak to the press that Goldwater had had two nervous breakdowns, and held in reserve a rumor about his opponent's having fathered an illegitimate child.

As President, Johnson also took bags of cash (all the while moaning that he did not want to be "another Harding"). He instructed his legal counsel Abe Fortas to empty Walter Jenkins's safe before the police could seal its contents, a clear obstruction of justice—and an impeachable offense—and he later nominated Fortas to the Supreme Court on the presumption that he would act as an inside leaker to the White House. (The presumption was correct.) He treated Vice President Hubert Humphrey like an office boy; to judge by the text of their conversations, it seems as if Humphrey actually enjoyed the experience.

On foreign policy Johnson was inevitably at the mercy of his advisers, and some of the advice they gave him was flatly wrong. Still, he was the President, and the choices were his and his alone. The picture that emerges here, however, is of a powerful man willing to make decisions only as long as others could be blamed if things went wrong. Thus, when a civil war broke out in the Dominican Republic, Johnson was keen to send in the Marines, but he also wanted Ambassador Tapley Bennett to bear the onus by calling for them first. (Unfortunately for LBJ, Bennett was home on leave at the time.)

* While Beschloss is meticulous in identifying references throughout, he might have provided more background about the Bobby Baker and Billy Sol Estes financial scandals. As it is, readers are left wondering what Johnson is so agitated about.


LUTHER *meets* **SMITH**

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When it came to Vietnam, Johnson represented himself as boxed in by, on the one hand, policies put into place by his predecessor John F. Kennedy and, on the other, pressures from the U.S. military. There is some truth to the former, but not necessarily to the latter. *Dereliction of Duty* (1997), H.R. McMaster's study of high military policy in Vietnam, gives ample reason to doubt that Johnson was being pressured by the Joint Chiefs. If anything, the pressure went in the other direction. Either way, though, it was Johnson, not the Chiefs, who was responsible for the big decisions—and the small ones, too, since Johnson's penchant for micromanagement even led him to pick individual bombing targets. As he says at one point, "they can't hit an outhouse without my permission."

The historian Larry Berman has already uncovered the fact that, as early as 1966, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara harbored serious doubts about the war. It seems that Johnson's doubts arose even earlier, and were more intense. The remarkable conversations recorded on tape reveal a President in the grip of a black pessimism about Vietnam even before the massive commitment of American troops. While he may not have anticipated American defeat in the struggle with Hanoi, he never believed in the possibility of anything resembling victory. As he remarked to McNamara:

> I don't think anything is going to be as bad as losing, and I don't see any way of winning (February 26, 1965).

To Senator Richard Russell:

> A man can fight if he can see the daylight down the road somewhere. But there ain't no daylight in Vietnam. There's not a bit (March 6, 1965).

And there is an unforgettable exchange with Senator Mike Mansfield:

> LBJ: What do we do about [General William Westmoreland's] request for more men? . . .
>
> Mansfield: [A]s you said earlier, it's 75,000, then it's 150,000, then it's 300,000. Where do you stop?
>
> LBJ: You don't. . . . To me, it's shaping up like this, Mike—you either get out or you get *in*. . . . We've tried all the neutral things. And we think they [North Vietnam] are winning. Now if *we* think they're winning, you can imagine what *they* think (June 8, 1965).

It may well be, of course, that Beschloss has chosen to reproduce these pessimistic comments simply because they are so dramatically at variance with Johnson's frequently stated public position on Vietnam. Nor, in the totality of thousands of hours of taped private conversations, does the reader have a way of knowing how representative these views really were. Nonetheless, on the face of it the evidence would seem strong that Johnson sent young Americans to die in a war he believed to be unwinnable.

As *Reaching for Glory* draws to a close, Johnson is facing a backlash from conservative voters over some of his social policies, including on race, and a serious defection over Vietnam within the liberal ranks of his own party. As things turn sour, he begins to lose sleep and becomes increasingly morose. Fearing for his health, Lady Bird goes so far as to bring a black dress from their Texas home to the White House in case she will need it for his funeral. But Johnson summons the strength to continue for three more years. Presumably these will occupy the final volume (or volumes) of this series.

Though historians and the general public cannot but be grateful to the Johnson family, and particularly to Lady Bird Johnson, for agreeing to unseal the tapes and allow Beschloss to publish these books, one must wonder what private purpose they sought to serve. Lyndon Johnson's stature among modern Presidents is not, to put it kindly, very high. The publication of this book will not enhance it.

---

## Caveman

Holy War, Inc.:
Inside the Secret World
of Osama bin Laden
by Peter L. Bergen
*Free Press. 304 pp. $26.00*

Reviewed by
Marin J. Strmecki

OSAMA BIN LADEN is the man who dared to wage war against a superpower, and a cottage industry of analysts and reporters has been racing to explain him to the public. At the head of the pack is Peter Bergen, a CNN producer whose team interviewed bin Laden in 1997 and who has now written a biography that promises to take us "inside the secret world" of the al Qaeda terrorist network.

Bergen begins his narrative with an extended account of the travails he endured to secure his 1997 audience: meetings with three intermediaries in London, a perilous passage through Pakistan, glimpses into the sufferings of everyday life in Afghanistan under the fanatical Taliban, and the gauntlet of arcane security measures imposed by bin Laden's palace guard to protect the secrecy of their charge's location. In the interview itself, bin Laden declared that one of his objectives was to "drive the Americans away from all Muslim countries," and he also spoke menacingly of his future plans:

MARIN J. STRMECKI, *a new contributor, traveled with the Afghan mujahideen in the 1980's and has written and lectured widely on the conflict in Afghanistan.*



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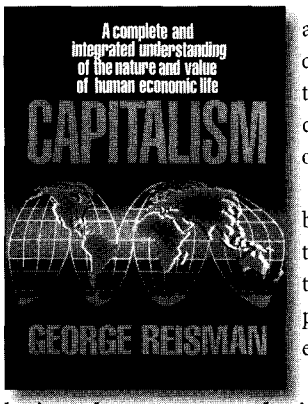
# A SIMPLE SUPER-WEAPON AGAINST MIDDLE-EAST TERRORISM

## BY GEORGE REISMAN

**Middle Eastern terrorism rests on a foundation of financial support in the form of revenues derived from the sale of oil by the Arab members of the OPEC cartel.**




It clearly follows that the key to choking off the funds that finance terrorism is to reduce as much as possible the funds now flowing to OPEC. Based on an annual OPEC production of about 11 billion barrels of oil, every dollar that the average annual price of a barrel of oil can be made to fall means approximately $11 billion dollars a year less going to OPEC—and thus correspondingly less money directly or indirectly available with which to finance terrorism.

**The means are readily available to bring about a lasting reduction in the price of oil to at least somewhere below $20 per barrel and probably to below $10 per barrel.**

What makes possible the potential for such large declines in a relatively short period of time is the very same characteristic of the demand for oil that leads to spikes in its price when its production is cut by just a small percent—namely, the so-called inelasticity of the demand for oil. This is the fact that to reduce by a relatively small amount the quantity of oil demanded, or to increase it by a relatively small amount, substantially larger changes in price are required.

**It is possible to bring about a dramatic fall in the price of oil. All that is necessary is to *abolish the U.S. government's restrictions on domestic energy production inspired by the environmentalist movement.***

Consider the potential for increasing the supply of oil by opening up both the whole of the continental shelf of the United States and all of the vast so-called wildlife preserves and wilderness areas in Alaska and the rest of the country to drilling for oil.

Certainly, these sources could soon very easily increase the world's supply of oil by the few percent needed to make the price of oil plunge. And to the extent that OPEC sought to prevent a fall in price by equivalently curtailing its own production, it would be deprived of the full amount of the revenues it had earned on that production.

**In addition, any maintenance of the high price by OPEC would serve only to put revenues and profits that it had been earning into the pockets of its American competitors, who would thereby have the financial means as well as the incentive to further expand at OPEC's expense.**

Abolishing our restrictions on coal and natural gas production and on atomic power would further compound OPEC's problems. This is because any expansion in the supply of these competing sources of energy and fall in their price serves to reduce the quantity of oil demanded at any given price of oil. The result is that, in the face of a fall in the demand for oil, any given production of oil can be sold only at a lower price than would otherwise be possible.

In other words, the price of oil would fall not only because of an increase in its supply but also because of the decrease in the demand for oil that would result from the increase in the supply of coal, natural gas, and atomic power. There would be a larger supply of energy in general and a fall in the price of energy in general.

**In an environment of economic freedom for energy production in the United States, OPEC would lose all incentive to maintain the price of oil at anywhere near its present level by reducing the quantity of oil it produced.**

This is because it would then have to reduce its production by an amount equal not only to the expansion of oil production in the United States but also to the reduction in the quantity of oil demanded because of the increase in the supply and fall in price of competing sources of energy. The magnitude of reduction in its production of oil that would be required to offset all of this expansion would be too great to make the reduction worthwhile to OPEC.

**Had the United States pursued a policy of economic freedom with respect to energy production over the last thirty years, the conditions for OPEC's success as a cartel would never have been present in the first place, and the accumulation of vast funds capable of supporting terrorism would never have been able to occur.**

Every barrel of oil that the environmentalists have succeeded in getting the U.S. government not to allow to be produced, every ton of coal that they have prevented from being mined, every atomic power plant whose construction they have stopped, has served to make oil scarcer and more expensive and consequently to enrich OPEC and increase the funds available for the support of terrorism.

Today, after thousands of needless deaths and major destruction of property of symbolic as well as economic value, the supporters of environmentalism are among those who must make a choice.

**Which do they value more: indulging their exaggerated fear of oil spills on beaches and their boundless desire for nature untouched by man, or the lives and property of innocent victims of terrorism and, as now seems likely, the lives of hundreds and possibly thousands of young servicemen and women and the potentially enormous economic costs of a war? The environmentalists must choose.**

---

**George Reisman** (www.capitalism.net) is the author of ***Capitalism: A Treatise on Economics*** ($95, Jameson Books), a book you will "want in your library if you want to know what an intelligent advocate of capitalism would say on almost any economic issue" (***Fortune*** Magazine), "brimming with original theories it is remarkable for its depth, scope and rigorous argument ***(Publishers Weekly).***

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"You'll see them and hear about them in the media, God willing."

Born in 1957, seventeenth among the more than 50 children produced by the many wives of a multimillionaire Saudi construction magnate, bin Laden, according to Bergen, owes his own radical brand of Islam to the years he spent at King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah. There he fell under the influence of Islamists dedicated to the proposition that the obligation to wage jihad extends not only to defensive battles against attacking infidels but also to offensive warfare against all enemies of Islam, and that it must conclude with the restoration of the caliphate, a government that will reign supreme over the entire Muslim world.

With this ideology pulsing in his blood, bin Laden began raising money to help the Afghan resistance defeat the Soviet invader. By 1986, he had moved to the Pakistani city of Peshawar and worked to finance and operate guesthouses for the so-called Afghan Arabs, volunteers from across the Middle East who had come to join the jihad. In this endeavor, he collaborated closely with, among others, Prince Turki al-Faisal, the chief of Saudi intelligence, who was keen to funnel his kingdom's funds to the effort, and also with Gulbiddin Hekmatyar, an anti-American fundamentalist to whom Pakistan's intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), channeled the lion's share of U.S. arms and money intended to support the Afghan resistance.

In these years, as Bergen recounts, bin Laden's broader network began to take shape. Peshawar had become a breeding ground for aspiring and established jihadists alike, and bin Laden exploited his presence there to establish contacts with men of violent disposition from several countries. They included Ayman al-Zawahiri, a key leader of Egyptian Jihad who later became his right-hand man in al Qaeda, and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric who would come to play a key role in the 1993 plot to bomb New York City landmarks. By the close of the decade, bin Laden had founded al Qaeda, which Bergen likens to a terrorist holding company that owns a partial or controlling interest in terrorist affiliates around the world.

Bin Laden's plans were interrupted in 1989 when the new government of Benazir Bhutto forced him to leave Pakistan. He returned to Saudi Arabia for a spell, but ran afoul of the regime because of his radical Islamist politics and had to flee to Sudan. Drawing upon his own considerable wealth as well as donations from sympathizers, and with the blessings of the Sudanese government, bin Laden proceeded to professionalize and further globalize al Qaeda, setting up training camps and establishing ties with like-minded Islamic radicals in such far-flung lands as India, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Bosnia.

In short order, as Bergen shows, the foot soldiers of his organization were inducted into the paramilitary arts. Also in short order, a string of bloody terrorist operations was set in motion in which bin Laden had either an indirect or leading hand: two hotel bombings in Yemen in 1992; attacks on U.S. troops in Somalia and the truck bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993; the killing of five Americans in a car bombing in Saudi Arabia and the truck bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan in 1995; and the truck bombing of the Khobar Towers, killing nineteen Americans, in Saudi Arabia in 1996.

By the time of this last attack, Sudan had come under intense pressure from Egypt and the United States for continuing to harbor bin Laden, and he once again had to take flight. This time he went to Afghanistan, where the Taliban offered to protect him as an honored guest. From his new sanctuary, bin Laden issued a public call for Allah to visit

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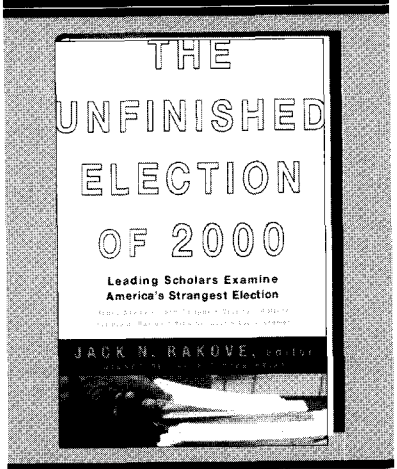


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anger upon the Americans and their allies and "to send whom He has from the sky to kill them." What followed were many more attacks, including the truck bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998, the bombing of the *USS Cole* in Yemen in 2000, and the mass destruction "from the sky" of September 11, 2001.

*Holy War, Inc.* offers a lively narrative of bin Laden's life and accomplishments, such as they are, but as both a piece of writing and a piece of research it has some significant shortcomings.

To begin with less serious matters, Bergen displays a tiresome penchant for elaborate and heavyhanded descriptions of the exotic locales in which he has found himself. Here he is, for example, on Afghanistan:

> The very word is an incantation. I will never get over the thrill of seeing the country. In my imagination it has always seemed like something out of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. It promises mystery, a movement back into a time of medieval chivalry and medieval cruelty, an absence of the modern world that is both thrilling and disturbing.

And so forth and so on.

When he turns from local color to substance, the writing gets better, but the analysis is often either incomplete or misleading. An example of the former is Bergen's treatment of al Qaeda's relationship with Pakistan. Bergen is of the view that the United States government made a major error in the 1980's in relying on Pakistan's ISI to manage the resources meant for the anti-Soviet Afghan resistance. Much of what our government dispensed through this channel, he shows, ended up in the hands of the anti-American Hekmatyar, who used it for his own purposes and seldom sent fighters to battle the Soviets.

Bergen is largely on track here, but misses a related and more consequential point. Over the past decade, it was the ISI that forged the link between bin Laden and the Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar, and it also played a central role in developing the al Qaeda infrastructure in Afghanistan and integrating its fighting forces with the Taliban military. The agency's involvement raises profound questions about our alliance with Pakistan in the war against terrorism, particularly as long as the Pakistani intelligence service remains unpurged of its pro-Taliban, pro-al Qaeda elements.

Examining U.S. policy toward bin Laden in the 1990's, Bergen does a competent but again incomplete job with the central historical question of the era: did the Clinton administration actually fail to notice that a formidable enemy was conducting a war against the United States, or did the President fail to mobilize an appropriate response? It is not a contradiction to say that the answer seems to be both.

In this connection, though, Bergen oddly omits mentioning the moment when bin Laden was forced to leave Sudan in 1996 and the Clinton administration let slip a major opportunity to take him into custody. To this day, senior Clinton administration officials defend themselves by saying that the U.S. had no legal basis on which to hold bin Laden at that point. But this argument is itself damning evidence that they were blind to the growing threat and were thinking about the terrorist danger not in strategic but only in narrow legal terms.

By 1998, when the administration did finally retaliate against bin Laden for his attacks on U.S. embassies in Africa, it acted with insufficient force. Bergen provides a vivid account of Clinton's feckless cruise-missile strikes against al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan: the salvo killed about twenty terrorists-in-training, but the destroyed mud-and-straw structures were rebuilt and back in business within weeks. Undoubtedly, this limited strike served primarily to confirm bin Laden in his view that the U.S. was cowardly and weak and could be struck again with relative impunity.

Not so much incomplete as misleading is Bergen's take on bin Laden's motives and intentions. The bin Laden he presents is a man driven primarily by a dream of expelling the American infidels from Saudi soil. When it comes to anything beyond that, Bergen is dismissive, characterizing bin Laden's ambition to unite the Muslim world under a restored caliphate as mostly a "rhetorical device" to mobilize supporters and as having "about as much chance as the Holy Roman Empire suddenly reappearing in Europe."

But the evidence favors a more expansive reading of bin Laden's will to power: that in fomenting terrorism his hope was to provoke a response that, unleashing turmoil in the Muslim world, would mobilize


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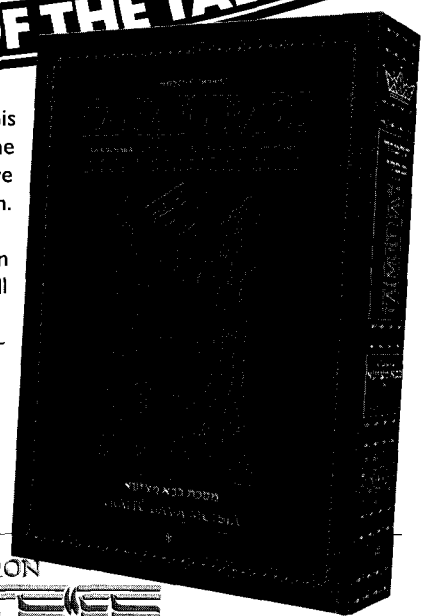

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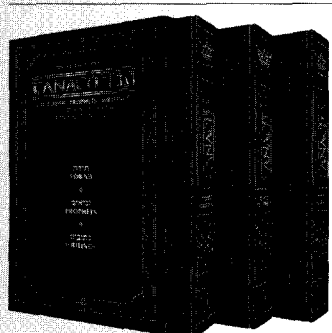

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elite and mass opinion, destabilize Saudi Arabia, and allow him to control its oil wealth for use toward his wider goals. Nor was this sequence entirely a pipe dream. The key here lay in bin Laden's connections to the Saudi regime, which were far thicker than the financial linkages to which Bergen confines himself.

As is well known, the Saudi regime has walked on eggshells in the current crisis, not only because fifteen of the nineteen hijackers of September 11 are thought to have been Saudi nationals, but also because an influential segment of the Saudi political elite—including important figures in the royal family—has itself been aligned with the terrorist leader. In this, Prince Turki—whose ties to bin Laden (and to Mullah Omar) were never broken and who was dismissed from his intelligence post only *after* September 11—was far from alone. Indeed, the widespread sympathy for bin Laden in Saudi Arabia suggests that even if al Qaeda is completely wiped out in Afghanistan, serious troubles are yet to come. In other words, the final tally of the damage to global stability wrought by bin Laden is still not in. He may, posthumously at least, achieve some of his goals.

Finally, when Bergen turns to the relationship between al Qaeda and Iraq, he cavalierly downplays the confirmed contact between Mohammed Atta, one of the ringleaders of September 11, and an Iraqi intelligence officer in Prague in June 2000. "[O]ne meeting," he writes, "does not an al Qaeda-Iraqi conspiracy make." He also quotes an unnamed U.S. counterterrorism official to the effect that "no one has drawn any conclusion of any sort about that meeting."

But others have convincingly argued that close ties between al Qaeda and Iraq date back to the years when bin Laden operated in Sudan, where senior Iraqi intelligence officials were also present. It seems, moreover, that Iraqi intelligence officers met with Atta on more than that one occasion in 2000. The last meeting, again in Prague, occurred in April 2001, and considering the risk of compromise involved, it would almost certainly not have taken place so close to the World Trade Center/Pentagon mission were it not of operational significance.

The superficiality of *Holy War, Inc.* in some instances, and its incompleteness in others, suggest the need for caution in approaching any book promising to take us "inside the secret world" of a clandestine organization. It is likely that the secret world of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda will really begin to emerge only after the interrogation of prisoners and the translation of the treasure trove of documents captured with the fall of the Taliban.

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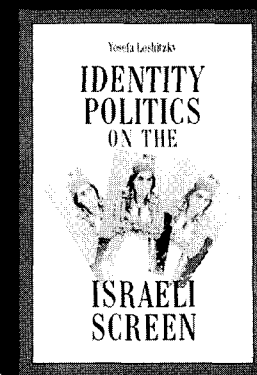


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**Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and acting director of the Boston University Department of Journalism.**

How tempting it is to say that David Westin, the president of ABC News, suffered a bout of foot-in-mouth disease when he told a Columbia Journalism School audience that "I actually have no opinion on that," in response to whether he considered the Pentagon a legitimate military target on September 11.

What about Steven Jukes, the Reuters editor, who offered, "We all know that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," as the excuse for the news agency's decision against describing the hijackers as "terrorists."

Or NPR's foreign editor, Loren Jenkins, who explained why he would report a secret U.S. commando staging area in Northern Pakistan if he found one: "I don't represent the government. I represent history, information, what happened."

Alas, the statements belie an underlying moral confusion that is beyond arrogance. **If the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are not acts of evil criminality, then is anything criminal in Mr. Westin's world?** Rwanda? Katyn forest? the Holocaust?

If killing innocent civilians for political purposes is not terrorism, then Reuters has summarily rejected the conventional usage of a familiar term. Would it similarly decline to call the premeditated killing of a single individual "murder"?

Mr. Jenkins, whose judgment could send American military personnel to their deaths, offers a supposedly noble excuse: "We journalists are above national allegiances. We are the historians for all mankind, the future's agents." But if you are also the eyes and ears of the enemy, don't demand access to military operations under the banner of the First Amendment. People no less idealistic than yourself died in the service of that amendment. It is not now yours to defile.

The press does have its role to play in a democracy, even during a time of war. That role is different from those of political or military institutions. The press cannot cease to ask questions and must view bland accounts of progress with skepticism. It cannot become a willing agent of disinformation in what the military euphemistically calls "the information war." It cannot shy from reporting failed operations or even successful ones that trigger excesses among allied troops. It cannot ignore civilian casualties or unthinkingly accept military charges that many of those casualties result from the enemy using civilians as shields.

In today's war the press was right to accept Taliban invitations to view what that government chose to make available, just as a decade ago, in the midst of Operation Desert Storm, Western reporters flocked to Baghdad to learn what they could. And yes, the press should report the words of adversaries, even Osama bin Laden, if those words are newsworthy and present no clear and present danger of terrorist violence.

**The quest is for truth. In time of war that quest is difficult and dangerous.** Coolness, analytic detachment, and an objective eye are all qualities to be admired in today's journalists as they have been in the past. But objectivity and neutrality are not synonyms. Nor does objectivity require the debasement of language. And no standard of credible journalism justifies putting the lives of Americans at risk.

*— Robert Zelnick*

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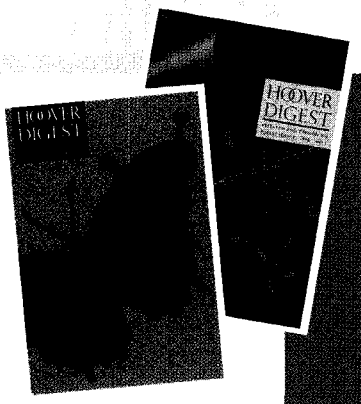


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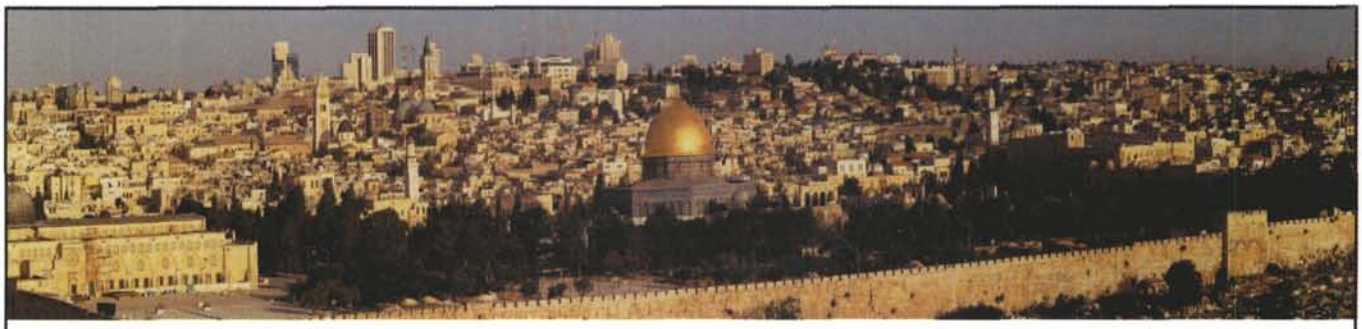

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